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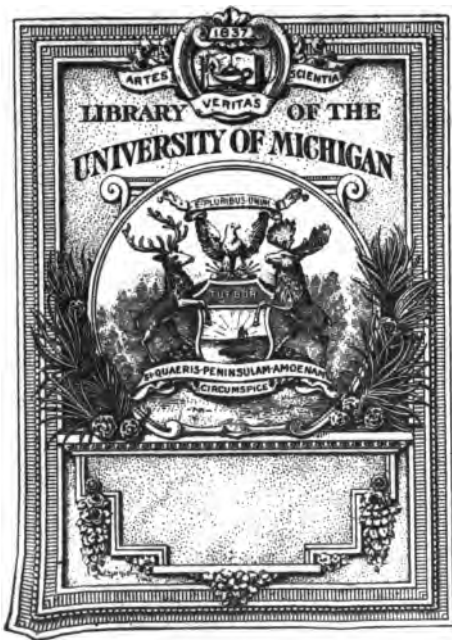
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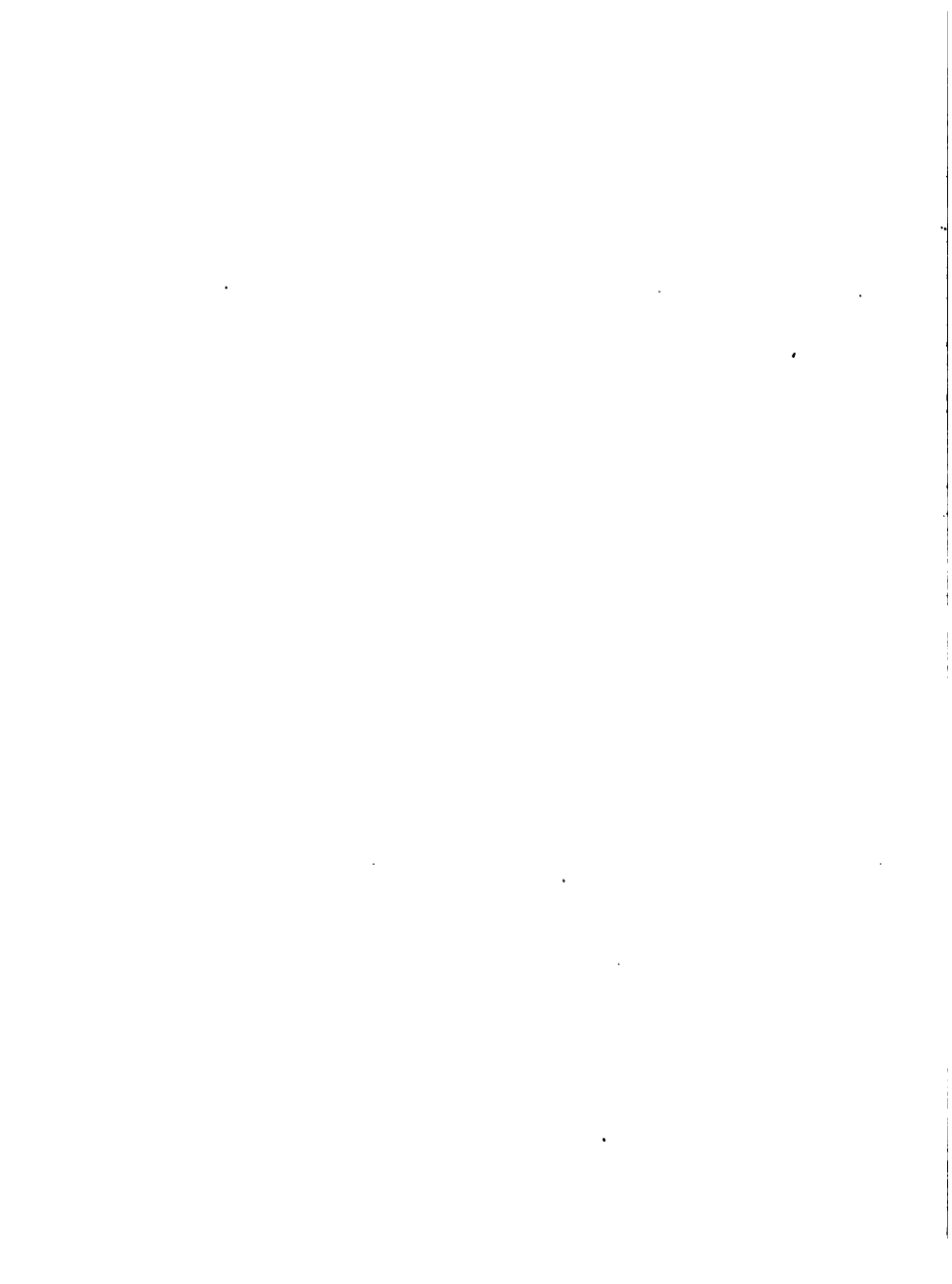
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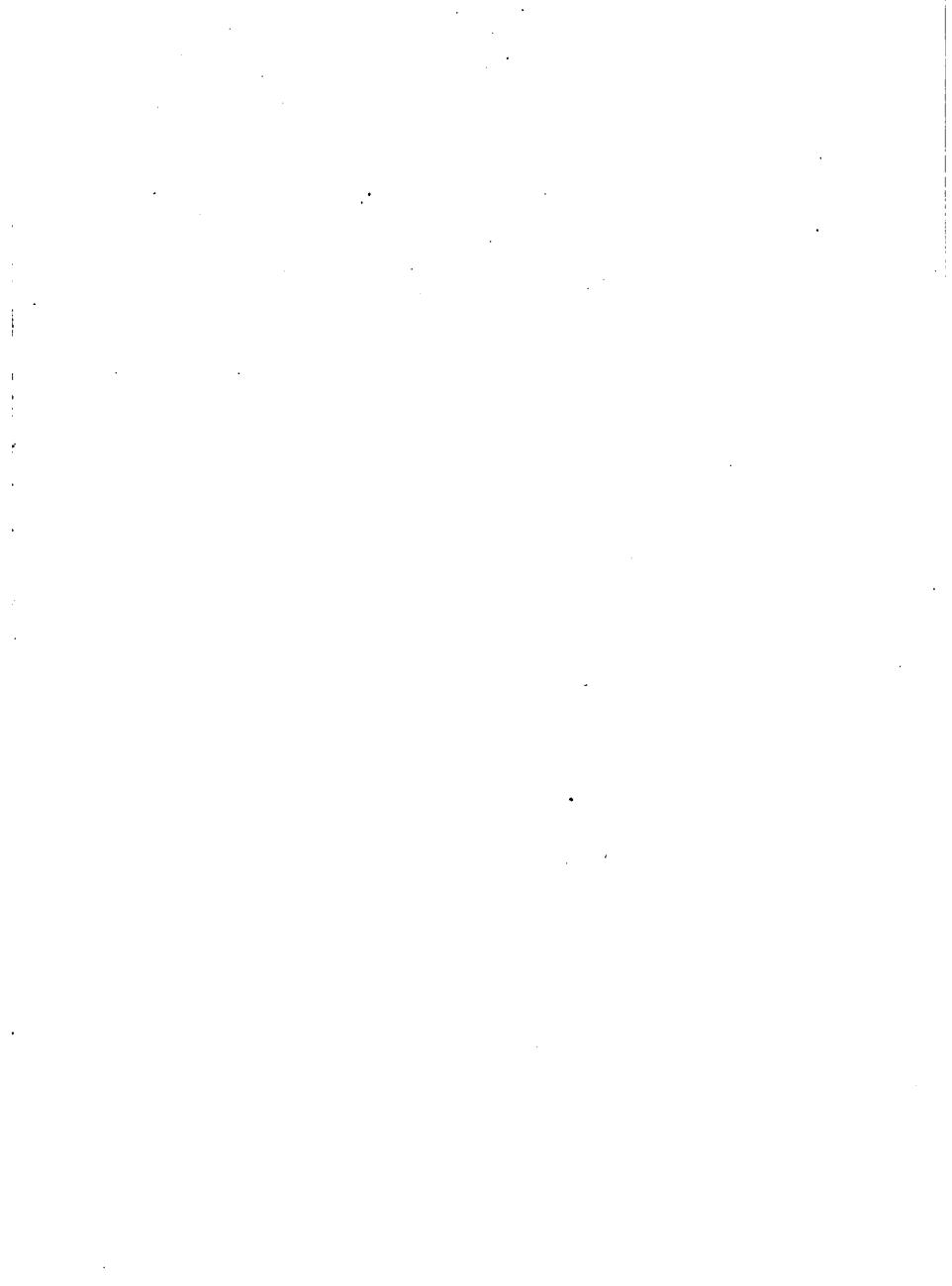
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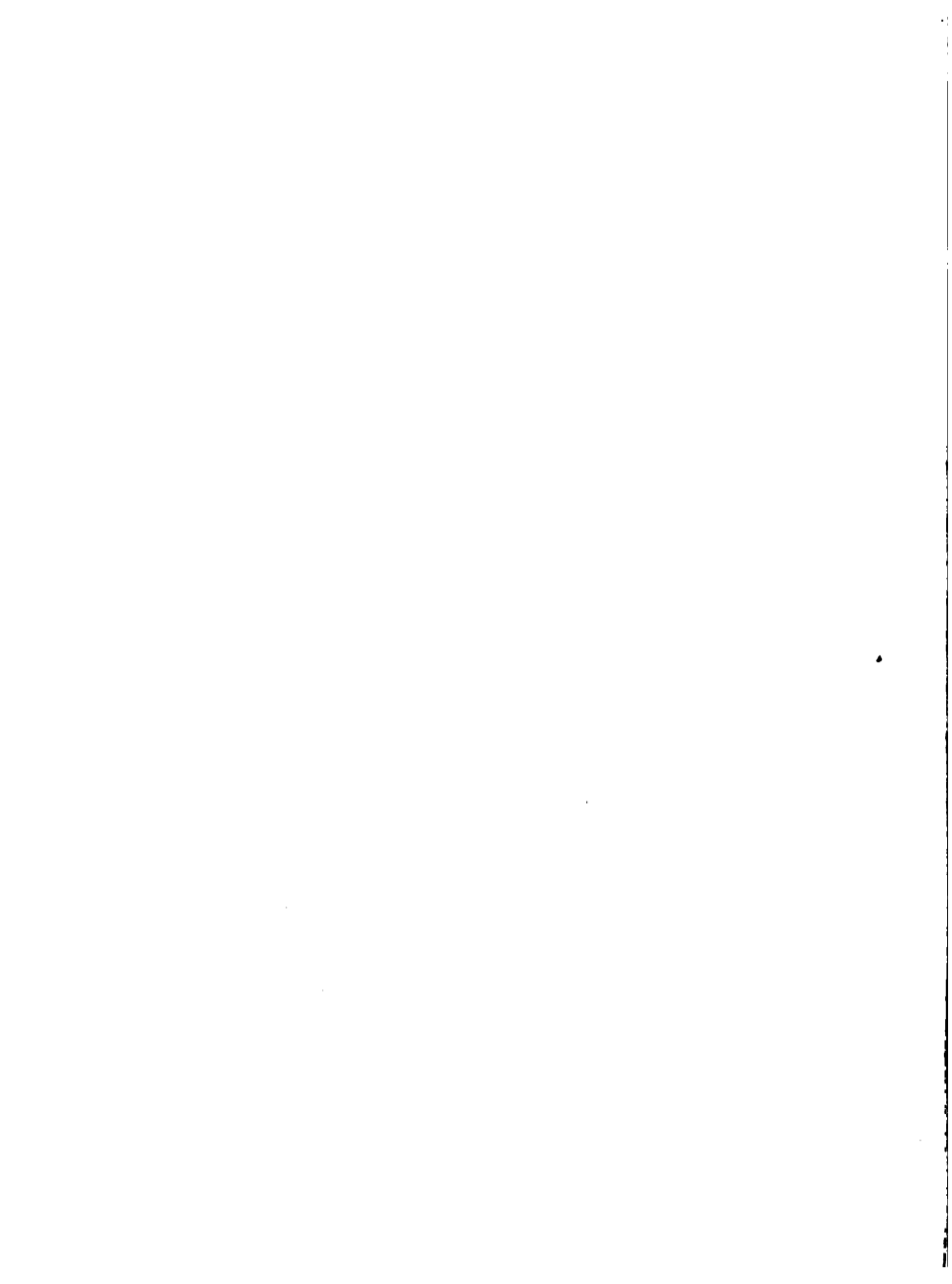
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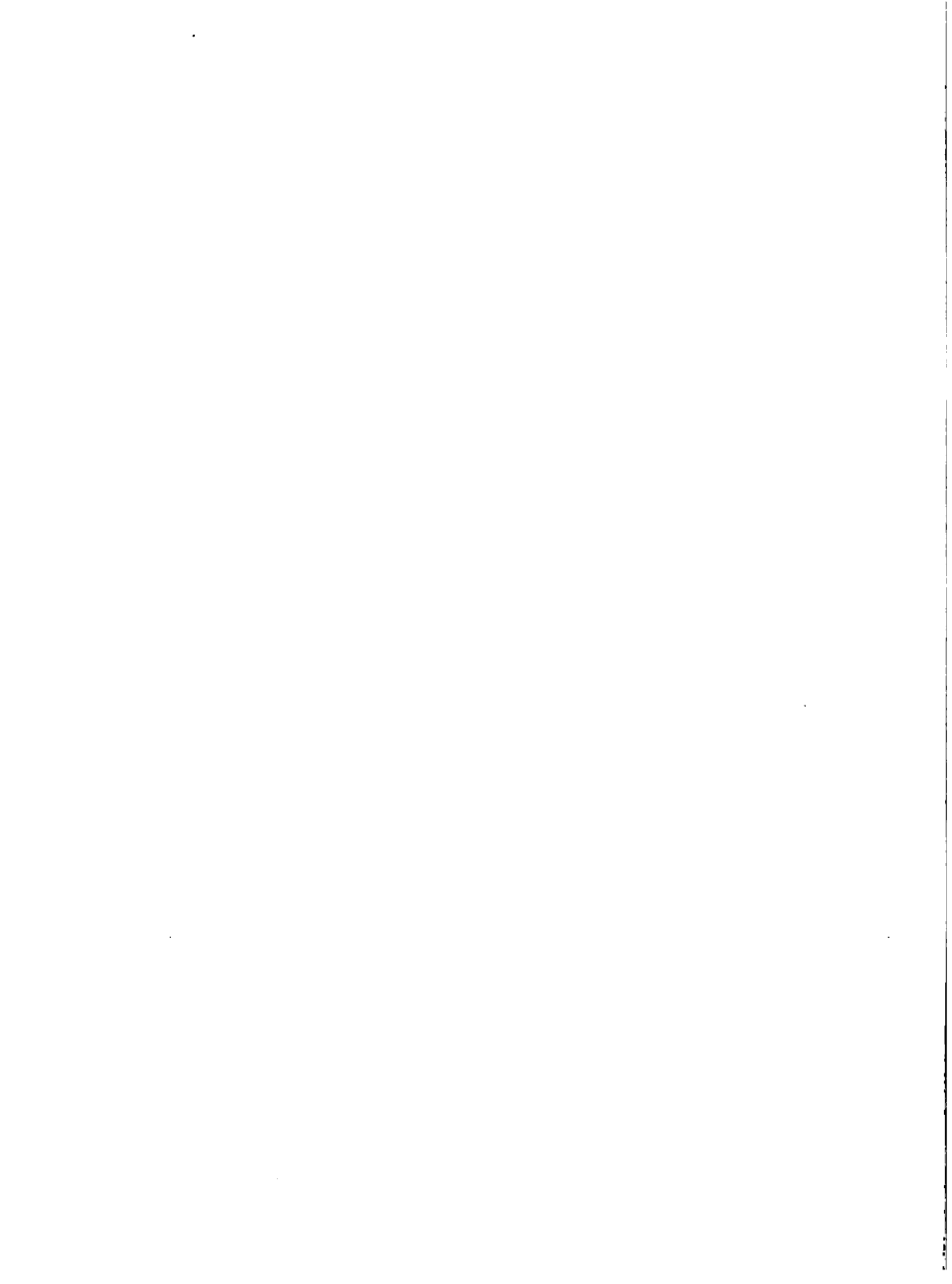
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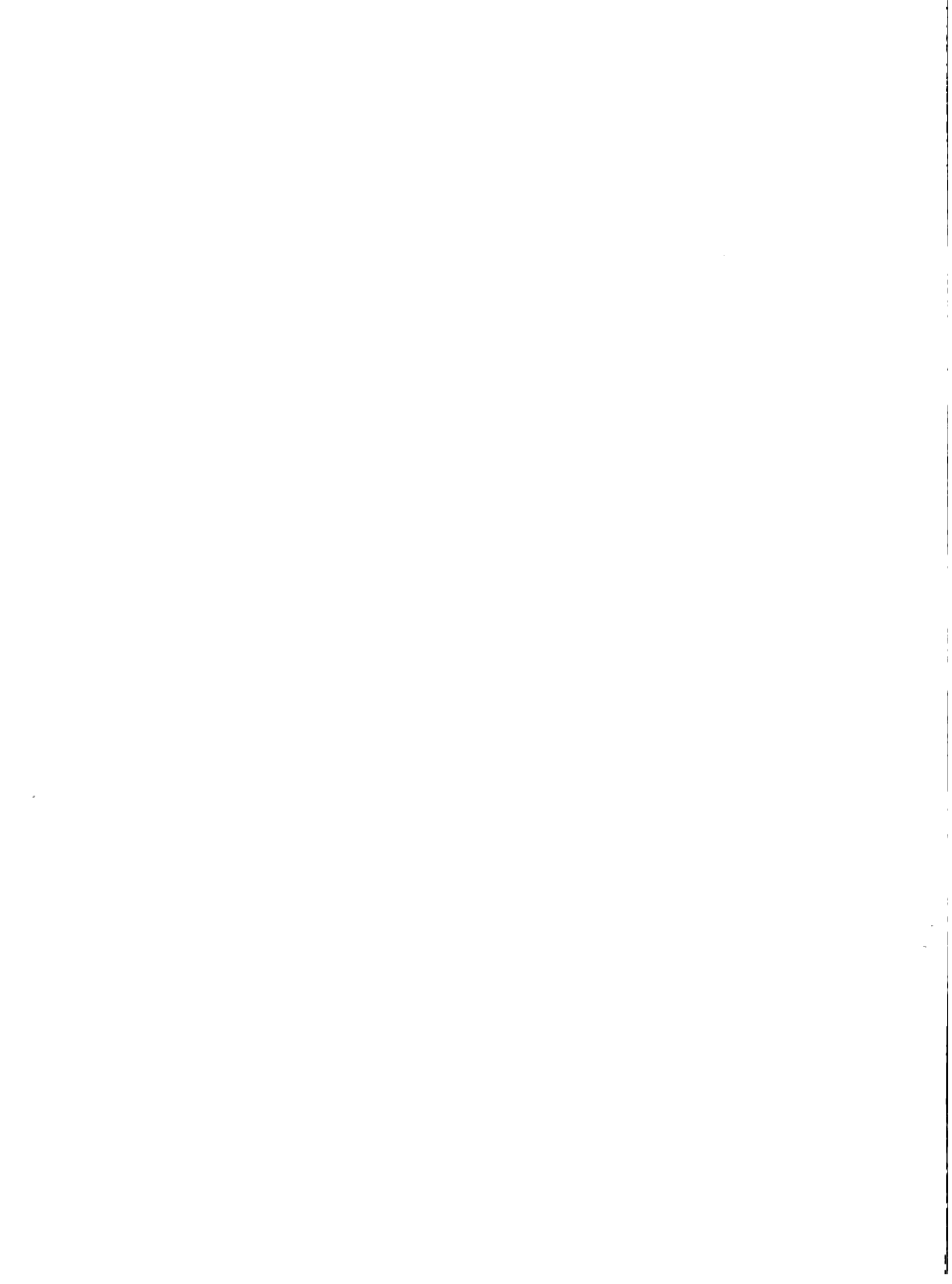












**THE
HUMAN FANTASY**

BY

JOHN HALL WHEELOCK



**BOSTON
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1911**

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TO
M. Z.



Acknowledgment is due *Scribner's Magazine* and the *American Magazine* for permission to reprint verses which first appeared in their pages.



I SEE you stand before me,—
Bizarre, absurd, enchanting,—
(The swinging, silver satchel,
The dear, ridiculous dress),

A little, dauntless figure,
Half lost in the enormous
Gay picture-hat bowed forward
Across the eager face.

Its single feather trembles
Against the dusk. Beyond you
The squalid, huddled city
With one red, flaring lamp

Looms sinister and haunting,
—The wastes that bred and bore you,—
A mockery heartbreaking,
A menace and a joke.

But you stand all unknowing,—
Glad-hearted, well, and reckless,
Magnanimous and merry,
My lost one,—O my youth!

You came to me, and with yourself you brought
The wings of unborn angels hovering near,
Of future lovelinesses, urgencies,
Vigors, and longings laboring to be;
Borne in the glad defiance of your breast,
The forward urge and passionate pulse of life.

With the wide arms of love spread out to save
You took me full of bounty unawares;
And all my youth the delirious arms of love,
Her insolent loveliness sensual and sane,
Life in her most intoxicating form,
Took, and lured back out of the woods of dream
Where long I lay, into the ruddy noon
And blinding beauty; savage and sweet and strong,
Drenched all my sadness in the exuberant joy,
Bowed down my dream with the athletic truth,
Humbling to the dear practicalness of yourself
And the great primal sacrifice, my pain.

Then at your healing breast the imagined pang
And willful anguish died, all love-subdued
By the dear vehement loveliness, whose weight
Hung at the heart and crowded out his woe;
Crushing all pain of self out with delight
Of your own influent sanity, all death
With the warm recklessness of lavish life,

You lured my being to fulfill itself,
What none had granted, never you denied:
Against my lips the clear, refreshing cup,
With generous courage of kind hands you held,
Laughing to see the tears of my surprise.

O, the dear sensual Fact of things, the Joy
Material and kind, that ever waits
In the great carnal fundamentals and rough
Of fleshly life, with arms held out to take
Back to her healing breast and dreamless heart
The tortured soul, back from the fangs of dream,
Whispering with red lips of dreamlessness,
"Here, here, at least, my own shall have his will!"

So was it then. Now that beyond the slope,
Out of your reach, my heart into the vale
Of endless dreams turned deathward takes its way,
I feel you like the voice of one afar,
Gracious to heal, all powerless to save,
Wanton and well—exuberantly beyond,
From the glad lands of love, cry out to me
For the last time, to call me back again
Loveward, out of the darkening wastes of death,
Lifeward, out of the barren peaks of pain:
The last brave breath and sensual lure of life
From the dim valley slumbering below,
Her last clear call, compassionate and kind,
To the old loveliness and dear delight,
The rhythmic abandon of the barbaric joy.

AROUND me reach the huddled and tumbled streets.
One desolate lamp in the twilit square afar
Flares in the gusty blast, and over all
The sunset like a hallowing memory dwells.

One with all these—the ways of the city's waste,
Worn haunts of the vast humanity coarse and brave,
Sordid and common, but holy to the core—
Ah, now I feel it as in the days of old
Thrill through my spirit with sweet, persuasive life,
A flash of your presence—lovable, tawdry, dear!

THE vastitude of space comes down to your own door,
 Equally with the stars, the common and the street
 Are part of the great Beauty that shines from shore
 to shore.

The universe divine lies 'round us at our feet—
 Tangible, made of dust, and holy to the core.

Not in a world beyond lies wonder, nor above,
 Nor throned among the spheres, nor set for days to
 be—

Over you and beneath, whether you sleep or move,
 Reaches the moral Fact, the starry Eternity—
 And all the hell of hate and all the heaven of love.

O, between birth and death, here in this womb of
 races

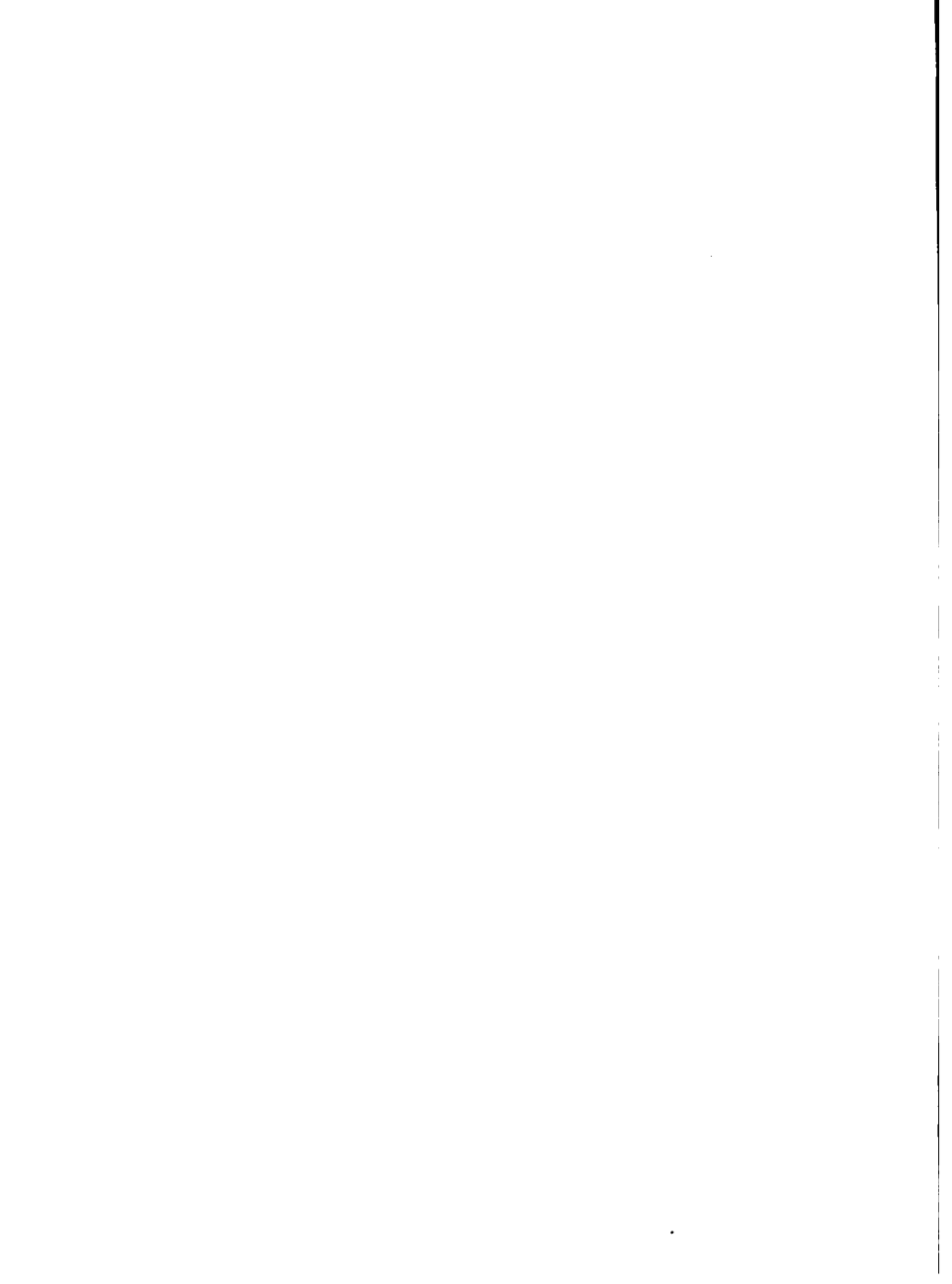
Across the field of the world from you to the
 farthest end
 Scattered abroad like flowers, the myriad, myriad
 faces,

The lives fated to yours of lover and of friend,
 Have you no love to shout across the horizoned
 spaces!

Before your generation and you go hurrying by,
 Have you no word for all, of pure and starriest
 breath!

O, how the common doom transfigures Destiny!
 In the dear thought of all who pass through life
 and death

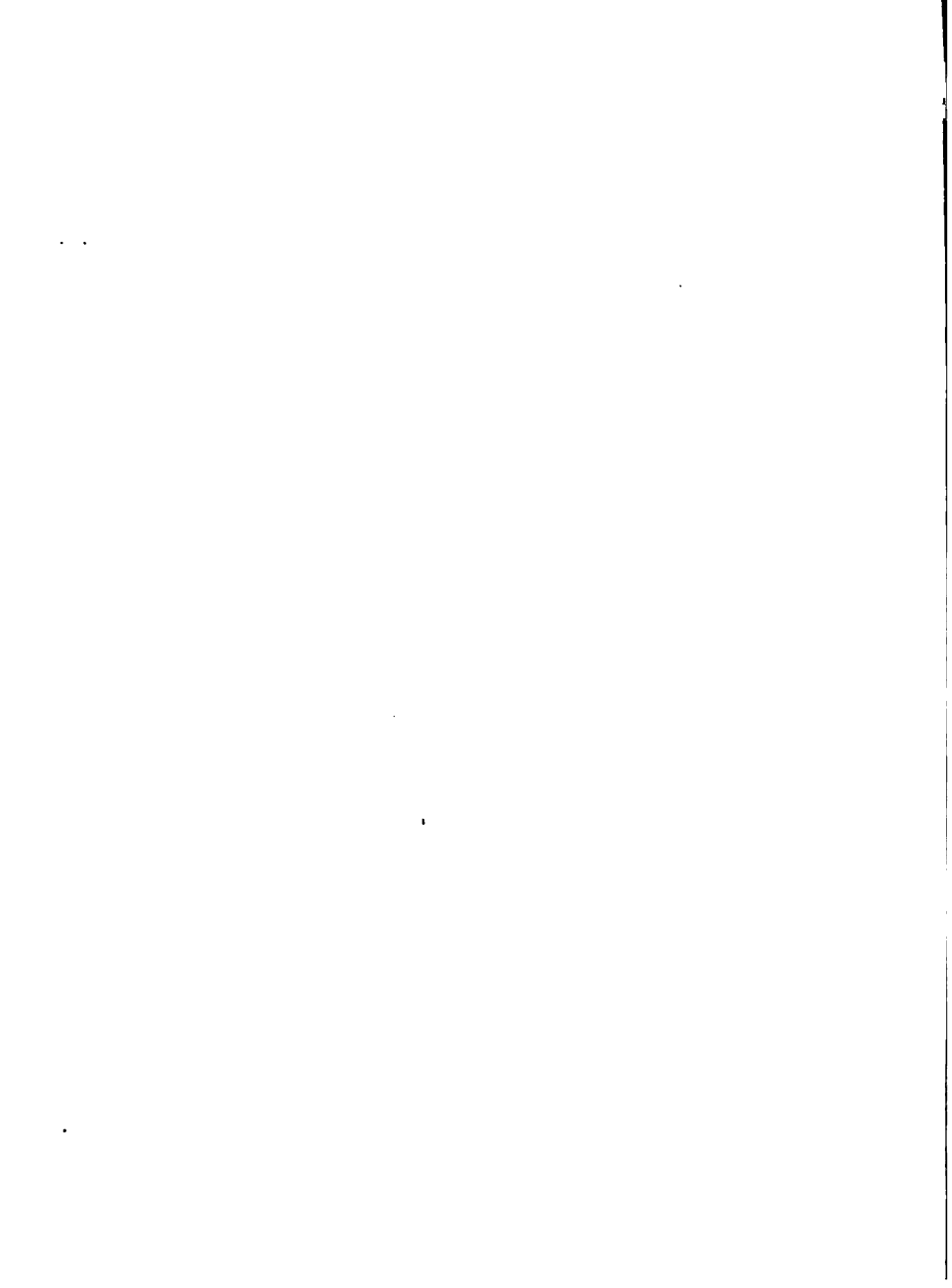
Splendid it is to live and glorious to die.



LOVE IN THE CITY

WITHIN the modern world deformed and vast
Lurks everlasting—though all men deny—
The awful Force that in the ages past
Walked on the waves and cried on Calvary.

I feel it in the crowded city street,
'Mid iron walls and wheels and clanging cars,
I feel it in my pulses as they beat—
The monstrous Secret that propels the stars.



So it appears that he fell in love with her,—a little shop-girl, I believe she was, and a Roman Catholic, pretty, jolly, impetuous and foolish, tawdry and absurd enough. Well, it was but a boy and girl affair in the end, very youthful and unworldly, very silly as many would say. They were both exceedingly young, and the intoxication and whirl of a great city,—the new environment and all,—undoubtedly played their part. Immature is the word for it.

Yet, even so, how it could have happened I can't imagine, C. being the unreal and complicated sort of a ghost that he is, always with his nose in a book, or imagining some fanciful thing; the last sort of person that you would picture in any real flesh and blood romance, and so commonplace a one at that.

Perhaps it was her very qualities of crude reality and vigorous exuberance of life which, seeming to open up to him for the first time the healing and tangible world, lured him into it, as a sort of escape, for that very reason: or possibly those very unreal and impractical streaks in his nature made it difficult for him to grasp all the contingencies of the actual situation!

At all events, it was through falling in love with her that he first fell in love with the world of men

and women, even the sordid, but lovable world of the less fortunate population of the city, I mean.

B. says that he could never have been in love with the girl, or he would have married her, and that without a thought, but I believe that the fear of hurting others whom he loved greatly, but who never could have understood, and above all the painful knowledge of the difficulties that such a connection would have brought into her own life,—yes, the certainty, as he assured me, that in the end it was better for her, were the sole motives in his renunciation. Or was it but so foolish and youthful an affair that neither really knew his own mind, further than the natural and fugitive impulse which drove them, for a short space, together? Brought face to face with either of the two conclusions which such a situation inevitably leads to, he first awoke to the insufficiency of their young illusion, while C.'s innate chivalry balked at any step which must be of so great a hurt to her.

Granted that it was but a fascination and a case of "calf-love," it was enough to prevent him from sullying her, in any way, on a night when they had abandoned themselves to one instinct, passionate and impetuous in both. This was the night before the day set for his departure from the city and when he knew that he should probably not see her again.

Light little bird that she was, I doubt if she could understand his feelings and, they say, has rapidly

forgotten him, not without a certain disgust very justifiable. It is better so, in any case.

He ended his three months' stay in the city immediately after the final incident and left "Hotel ——" the end of June . . .

How wonderful, by the way, the city is these autumn days, or at any season, for that matter! I feel it more and more, the gigantic outer splendor of that titanic mother, the nurse of so many souls—the inner tragedy and triumph of all that goes on within those monstrous walls. How the sad aura of lovable, sordid humanity pervades it,—common, but O how careless, brave and well,—how divine at core! This pathetic and absurd little grl seems, in the end, a breath and a symbol of it all. . . .

From a letter in the unpublished novel, "First Love," by F. F.

FIRST MEETING

THE ponderous glory of the radiant noon
Poured through the streets a molten fire ablaze,
On alley and parkway hung a vibrant haze,
The city's voice came low as in a swoon.

Yet thunders of her traffic, east and west,
Sounded like waters on a distant shore—
And in the silences forevermore
The laborings of a titanic breast.

Through square and street like living pulses thrust
Down justling veins as from a central motion,
Surged wave on wave the huddled human ocean,
—The joy—the pain—the holiness—the lust;

Artist and laborer, harlot, fop and sage,
The shrewd old peddler with the wooden leg,
Gay cavalier and limping hobble-peg—
The eyes of childhood and the brows of age,

A glorious flood of clear and cleansing length,
Vigorous from the buffet and the strife,
The brine of the reality of life,
And filled with laughter and eternal strength,—

A flood of waters, pitiless and splendid,
To bathe the pain out of the single soul;
All little sorrow and all selfish dole,
All single effort and all dreams unended,

All sickliness, drowned out as in a sea
Of careless kindness and of power immense,
The carnal buoyance and the common sense
Of sane and sensual humanity!

So broke this beauty on him for a space,
Justled among the shoulders of the crowd,
When suddenly, as from a breaking cloud,
Out of the throng rose the belovèd face.

MIDNIGHT DOWN TOWN

Up through the cleft ravine
Of dizzy walls that seem to sway and lean
Among the planets lost,
Up through the iron gorges, like a ghost,
Through street and stony valley
Sneaks the first hour of morning; every alley,
By-way and empty square
Has a cold, corpselike look, a murderous air,
—Sinister, gruesome, dank.
Down the long rows of houses rank on rank
Wandering, furtive men
Make desolate the corners, and ever again
—A nightmare scream from hell—
From arch or hidden hollow comes the yell
Screeched of some wanton tabby,
Indecent. All the world is gray and shabby
And hopeless; office and store
Loom dark, the heavy blinds seem drawn forevermore.
Yet here,—O even here, too,
What brooding pathos stabs the meanness through
Suddenly, with a sense,
Not beauty, but something tragic and immense,
Vastly appealing! Bereft
Of all its glory, only the wounds are left
Here of humanity,
Her coarse and passionate effort, now set free
In sleep,—the hurts and scars,
Her patient ugliness beneath the unwearying stars.

THE ITALIAN RESTAURANT

WITHIN the tiny restaurant they sat,
He whispering many a word;
She in the mirror parleyed with her hat
Gravely, and hardly heard.

Till in the hall the ridiculous orchestra
With a waltz whirled 'round and 'round,
Dreamily to and fro began to stir
Her head to the dim sound.
—The waltz whirled 'round and 'round.

And the canary silent on the wall
Trilled through the smoky air;—
The clever bird, it never sang at all
He said, till she was there.

Now she was silent, not knowing what to say,—
Adorable, dignified,—
And strove to make her eyes seem far away,
Turning her head aside.—
The music died.

“O sweet, now I am happy—now at last,”—
(So fiercely) her laugh rang clear:
“O sweet, before my happiness is past
Kiss me and kill me here!”

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Then suddenly, lifting lips in quick regret
From the wine's brink divine,
She leaned toward him, and his lips were wet
With perfume and with wine.

THE THEATER-HOUR

At night along the city's dazzling ways
Flare dizzily, like fierce and flaming suns,
A million lights all scattering at once
A garish glare abroad and desolate blaze.

The narrow cañons and the gorges deep
Cut south and north in many a lurid line,
Like the starred streets of luminous heaven shine
That from the center to the circle sweep,

Unending vistas down the distance far.
Omnibus, motor, cab and lighted stage,
Drab trolley and immaculate equipage
Moves in the heaven of traffic like a star.

The jeweler's window with flashing gems awirl,
—Dim, moony stones, or liquid, orbed like Sirius,—
Swims like some dream, fantastic and delirious,
Of heaven set with diamonds and with pearl.

While soft, luxurious women half-reclined
On velvet cushions, delicately veiled
And clad about, glittering, plumed and mailed,
In sable chariots through the mazes wind;

Children, with flowery faces innocent

Between their elders in frank laughter throned,
Whirled through the hurtling chaos thunder-
zoned

Upon some quest of joy and merriment.

But who are these, with soft and stealthy tread

That through the monster city gleam and glide,
With weary lips, each jeweled like a bride;
What brides are these and to what banquet led,

Toward what bridegroom in what chamber white?

Keen as soft snakes they look and venomous
With poisonous lids,—O vision piteous,
The unhappier sisters of the streets of night!

SUNDAY IN THE PARK

'Twixt cloud and heavy cloud
The sun in heaven seemed to shine aloud
With radiant music, light
Lay like a garment, ponderous and bright,
On slope and winding lawn,
Low walls and exotic pagodas half withdrawn
Along the leafy dark,
On turret and minaret. Through all the Park
Light, vibrant like a lyre,
Sounded all-golden, touched alike with fire
The gay brass-band and the heads
Of the tulips 'round the formal garden beds.
And lo, careless and strong,
To music and laughter, throng on surging throng,
Through alley and bright glade,
Through portal and promenade decked for parade,
Loosed, as if long repressed,
Like tangible laughter from one living breast,
Rippled the rhythmic crowd;
And as wave chides with wave in the sea aloud,
So echoed far around
The blurred, sweet hum of tongues, a sleepy sound,
Like the vibrance heard of heat,—
And far around the noise of many feet
And ringing laughter,—a glorious
Torrent of surging life let loose uproarious
Down channels long denied,—

A sheer, clear sweep of loveliness deified
By the passions that make one,
Shot through with life and love and the living sun.

Drunk they were
With all the glory and the glittering air
Drawn down their veins like wine.
The earth seemed heaven and the heaven divine
And all things happy, only
The lions in caged rows lay mute and lonely,
Or pacing with eyes that yearn
Roared, like the city hungering for return
All 'round them eastward; they
From cage to cage observed them where they lay,
Or when with sleepless stride
Paced the shagged lord and the sweet, dreadful bride,
With fang and dripping lip;
Or the soft, wondering antelope would nip
Cropped grasses from her hand.
Sweet for them arm in arm it was to stand
By the barred space that held
Juno's sweet bird of beauty unparalleled,
With crest of golden stain
And the most solemn reverence of his train
Spread 'round him for delight,
Star-eyed and colored like the twilit night.

Now from the monkeys' cage
Demonic cries rang as of fiends in rage

And sharp, ridiculous shrieks
Raspingly; the hot sunlight on her cheeks
Flushed them like flame, her eyes
Flashed laughable and lovable surprise
(All seriousness) and when,
"Listen—" she cried, "O look—!" and turned again
With many an eager word,
Wounded with a sweet sense of things absurd,
Quick laughter cleft his heart
Kindling her own, and the quick blood to start,
Half between mirth and shame,
All up her temples in little waves of flame
And color. With love that laughs
In adoration and mockery mixed, nor quaffs
Deeplier, whirled and jostled
In the tumultuous crowd that buzzed and bustled
All 'round them, drenched and drowned
In light and joy and color and clashing sound,
Drunk with each other's eyes,
They passed as through a populous paradise,
Radiant and flushed and filled
With all the radiance that around them thrilled
In the garden of delights,
Of men and birds and beasts and fabulous sights,
Fountains and mosques and towers,
Fantastic cupolas and odorous flowers,
Of music and branches swaying,—
A world of love and laughter and holidaying.

The Sunday mood

Filled all the Park with revel and laughter, strewed,
Like flowers in windy places,
(Sweeter than flowers) a hundred swaying faces
Along the walks and ways—
Gay faces and gray faces gaunt with days,
Faces of nurse and maid
And camel-riding children half-afraid,
Or bending from above,—
Faces of loneliness, faces of love,
Faces of childish glee
Along the skirts of the menagerie,
Wide-eyed and wonder-eyed;
They two through all the hub-bub, side by side,
Passed, separate the most
From all the rest by love, yet rapt and lost,
Drowned in the general sense
Of all the multitude. Her innocence
And worldliness most shrewd,
Mixed in strange words of many an altering mood,
—Ridiculous, lovable,—drew
New laughter from his heart ever anew
She could not understand;
But a red rose bought at the flower stand,
For a peace offering,
Put truce between them and her frowns to wing.

So the fragrant afternoon

Wore on with murmuring sound as in a swoon;

The rose upon her breast
Drooped like the day, yet never craved of rest
Their eyes, nor ever tired,
For with the immortal buoyance they were fired
Whose large and careless strength
Through all glad breasts, through all the crowded
length
Of the human beauty flamed,—
Bounteous and sensual and unashamed,
Idle, superb and free,
The human delight in mere community,
Whose vigor made forget
Each heart its separate weariness and fret,
Each heart in the greater will
Of the general strength refreshed and quickened
still,
And with all hearts made one,
Shot through with life and love and the living sun.

THE CITY

THE gigantic bosom suckling at the breast
Her myriad souls and moaning still aloud,
Wind, sun and shadow lighten and overcloud,
Sun, moon and stars circle from east to west.

Her million wires hiss like living snakes,
Earth's elemental forces in disdain
Moan through her streets in sullen wrath of pain.
Nor twilight lulls her, nor the dawn awakes,

Lying forever with unslumbering breath—
The latter world's Prometheus chained and bound
For the new theft from heaven of fire new-found,
—Knowledge of good and evil, life and death.

A PORTRAIT

A CERTAIN hint in her of common sense,
A practicalness of all illusion void,
Stripping all facts of a futile eloquence—
These were the traits his watchfulness enjoyed.

From struggles with the world of give-and-take,
A very sagacious, incredulous mystery
Seen in her face and expression, seemed to make
Strange contrast with a virgin purity;

As one who knows the dingy world of fact—
Its lusts and hates and how their graves are dug,
Still sitting apart, most delicate and intact,
Knowing, but with raised shoulders and a shrug.

These with strange outbursts of fierce passion wild,
Out of a seeming compassionless carelessness,
Showed her part woman, part the eager child,
—But all glad courage and frank fearlessness;

Something half-animal, so strange and strong,
Like the wild-bird, that, when her lover sings,
Takes with sweet unconcern his holiest song,
Nor finds a sentiment in primal things.

BEGGARS

ALONG the electric city may be seen
Shapes of delight and images of dread,
Gaunt poverties and specters from the dead,—
Pests and abortions, hideous and unclean.

The beauty of humanity within
Each separate breast each separate spirit wears,
The sorrow of humanity that bears
The scars of natural and of passionate sin.

Through the starred blackness and the aisles immense
Faces of pain and pleasure hurry by,—
Gay carelessness and huddled misery,—
Faces of evil and of innocence.

Crouched on the curb-line, mendicants or hags,
Crippled, or slut-wise, clamor ulcerous things,
Haggard and filthy, that the night enrings,
—Gray locks obscene and most irreverent rags,

Begging a penny in quavering tones that quail,
To every face and form that hurries past
Repeating, and to every gusty blast,
“I once was—” there the words choked inward fail.

Along the streets the hearse returns again,
Empty of the still form, the flowers, the shroud,
The ambulance threads the laughter of the crowd,
Bearing earth's agony throned within one brain;

And here and there amid the glared unrest
Of the bright city, through the tumult move,
In the brief bliss of youth and lawless love,
Two shapes among the shadows; breast to breast

And lips to lips, whirled on they disappear;
Like a bright flash ominous ere the doom,
A little spark, amid the engirdling gloom,
Of the human joy, so fugitive, brave and dear!

ON THE FERRY-BOAT

THE ferry-boat into the waters dim
Slipped forward with a sound of churning foam,
Studded with stars hung low the heaven's dome
Around them, and along the city's rim,

Over the shadowed river's murky flowing
Glittered a million lights of starry sheen.
Sharp whiffs and ocean odors, salt and keen,
Swept up the east, and sullen whistles blowing

In from the sea-gate through the ocean ways.
Past dock and dock, past lamp and flaring lamp
They glided into the twilight chill and damp,
Over the waters, through the ghostly haze,

Over the lifting and the lapsing tide,
And left the city lying sleeplessly
At the soft bosom of the heaving sea,
At the bosom of the everlasting bride.

The silence and the engirdling solitude
Drew them together closer more and more,
Never had he observed her thus before,
So grave and yet so merry was her mood,

So tender yet so merry; all her speech
Was glad by turns and sad like April weather—

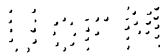
Close on the upper deck they sat together
Each lost within the happiness of each.

No less than if in an enchanted boat
They had sought beyond the stars a fairy realm
Of mosques and minarets, Love at the helm
And Joys for oarsmen, on the waves afloat,

They were embarked and drifted on the stream
Of night and waves, beyond the hand of day
And all her cares, cut loose and cut away
With steering prow into the dusk of dream.

And now at some new wonder as they went
Unveiled before them, with delight they sprang
To scan the waters, now their laughter rang,
Now sat they wordless in a deep content.

Around them reached the gray and glimmering shore,
Fortress and headland, tower and lamp of warning,
—The sea-road to the worlds beyond the morning
Behind them, and the eternal stars before.



THE HARBOR

By gates of ocean and the sea-ward portal,
Fortress and bastion—headlands of the world,—
Grim walls and sea-sapped battlements and turrets,
The weary wings of twilight are unfurled.

Under the gaunt and the windy clouds of morning,
Over the wide wastes and the fields of sea,
Storm-signals, capes and flashing promontories,
Sirens and bell-buoys rocking restlessly,

Slips the first ray, like a sword unsheathed, of morn-
ing—
And all the terror of the dawn lies bare;
By channel and reef, by oozy bog and sand-bar,
The seaward guns shine grim in the morning air.

Inland by desolate dock and lapping water
Sick scurf and scum rise lazily and fall
Along the wharves, indolent, sucked and drowsy
Looms rotting fender-post and crumbling wall.

But on the headland the sweet, virgin city,
Mistress and guardian of the clamoring lands,
Looks seaward with brave eyes toward the nations,
Sleepless, a sword forever in her hands,

1890

Holy and sacred. East and West salute her,
Clothed with the dawn and with the planets
crowned,
Voices and gongs and horns beyond the morning,—
Her myriad children on the wastes around.

IN THE CATHEDRAL

WITHIN the vaulted gloom the riotous indignation
And agonizing stress of the world, like a voice
that pleads,
The thunder of her wheels and worn preoccupation
Throbbled into a peace, before the brow that bleeds,
The irrevocable lips, the consummate consecration.

And the immortal Christ, the sad, sick dreamer hung
Carvenwise, with arms of pain that seemed to yearn
Toward the great breast below, unwounded and un-
rung,
The lips brimful of laughter, the hearts that beat
and burn,
The wanton, bounteous lust, forever well and young.

She seemed beside him sitting, as one afar might
seem
Lost in the general sense, a symbol of the human,
Lovable and absurd by contrast with the Supreme,
Before the eternal Christ, the everlasting woman,
Practical, filled with pity at the most dauntless
dream.

And deeper from the throng, as from a boundless
ocean,

A sense enwrapped him 'round of all humanity,—
The grandeur—the low shame, tumultuous contra-
motion,

A beauty rising radiant from her infirmity
To the most starry effort and the austere devotion.

O dear and common world, in factory and in slum
Still nursing at the breast the wild and veering
vision,

Incalculably brave, cruel, divine and dumb,

Crowning the ages' toil with sensual indecision,—
Mother, murther, tomb, and womb of Christs to
come!

TWILIGHT ALONG THE PARK

Down the stone valley, carven steep and straight,
Into the clouds, the streets of twilight run,
That blend in molten bars about the sun,—
Into the sunset and the evening's gate,

Reopening on starred heaven. The first few
Flames of her holy chamber now are seen,
Beyond the flickering twilight's fields of green
And the pierced clouds, deep in the boundless blue.

The stately mansions loom along the dark,
The somber and dim desert all around;
In the whole world there is one only sound,
A cracked old organ wheezing from the Park,—

'Mid the starred peace colossal and supreme,
Presumptuous, the only human voice,
Full of old tunes and ditties that rejoice
Half dolefully and die. The houses dream.

FIRST PRESAGES

THE waiter's look of sapience discreet,
 'Mid glances from the crowded tables cast
 Veiling a vile conjecture, as they passed
The restaurant door into the lamp-lit street,

Sickened him sharply with a new surmise
 That the first fears now to his spirit brought,
 Drowned in the meanness of a sordid thought
The laughter for him in her happy eyes.

Behind them closed the door, the music faded,
 Lost in the rumbling wheels that rattled by,
 In the hot, dusty twilight, dense and dry,
The joyless street lay colorless and jaded,

And the hunched beggar huddled on the ground,
 Baring before all eyes that go and come
 The weak and the inglorious martyrdom,
Seemed fixed and weary as the stones around.

By love more deep, part terror and part pity,
 Wakened from the light love with hurt surprise,
 He turned to her with other-seeing eyes.
They, arm-in-arm, descended through the city.

NOON

STRONG, pitiless and rude, through arch and alley
The world of men and women takes its way,
Night-haunt and theater have a void expression
In the clear light of the triumphant day.

With careless faces through the chaos jostled
Hurry the seekers worn of joy or wealth,
Each newsboy steals a march upon his fellows;
The air is full of buffet and of health.

But hist—the ambulance around the corner,
What huddled shape along the pavement lies!
Broad backs and bent, gay hats and gray surround it,
Cabby and fop, a ring of anxious eyes.

What arms have lifted up with awkward pity
The flimsy heap that has fallen by the wall!—
A flash of the human love, ashamed and clumsy,
Reckless and rough, but love beneath it all.

OLD WOMEN

Poor old Madge long years have gone
 Up and down this very street,
 Selling matches to such s buy,—
 Her heart is weary and her feet.

The young, gay shop-girls laugh at her,
 Weaving sad words about her name,
 And whispering behind her back
 Old scandals of immortal fame.

Her worn old body one time wore
 Soft garments spun, of intricate art,
 And was the temple and the shrine
 Of all the dreams of many a heart,

Of many first and tender vows,
 The source of sorrows and unrest;
 And the wild woe of many a head
 Has sunk to peace upon her breast.

What tears, what ecstasies has she seen,
 What inarticulate rapture heard
 From broken lips, what early love,
 And many a first and foolish word!

Wild loves, like wasted waves, have broke
 Her calm, cold loveliness upon
 The whole rage of their radiant strength:
 Still she remains, but they roll on.

Her fading body, which is the tomb
Of so much longing and regret,
Such fiery joy was wreaked upon—
Old memories haunt and mysteries yet.

Such wistful ardors there have died,
Such ecstasies, not wholly mean,
A certain holiness it has,—
Not utterly base, nor all obscene.

And still within her sordid eyes,
From many a wild, sweet night there clings
Some fire of the old fierce joy,
The memory of extravagant things.

And a stray word, or smile will draw
Perchance, into the withered face
The look that once some lover saw,
A wild regret of the old grace.

Yet oftenest she will not lift
The weary irony of her eyes,—
Much kindness has she seen before,
And she is old and very wise.

She is a part of the cold street
As much as any cobble-stone,
And though we laugh to see her there,
She would be missed if she were gone.

And so she plies her petty trade,—
Deep in her heart she bears such hate,
Selling but matches now, no more,—
This little fire, for that great.

For gentlemen that happen by,
To light up with along the way,
Which, having burnt their beauty out,
Even as herself they cast away.

HIS ROOM IN THE HOTEL

FACING the courtyard shadowy with dusk,
The gaudy bedroom of the huge hotel
With strange illusion of the twilight's cloud
That brooded there, around him seemed to grow
Into a vast illimitable space
Of endless variations. Arabesques,
Tinsel and complex scroll-work on the walls,
Where lurid outer lights flecked radiance flung
Up through the open window, seemed to tease
His brain to crazy ponderings on their forms,
New combinations, more involved designs
Until his mind was giddy. From the couch,
From a half-sleep, he to the window crawled
And saw how heaven, like an immense machine
Of intricate motions and revolving wheels,
All starry over the darkening city turned—
So awful over the tawdriness beneath,
So loud with light and resonant sound it seemed,
Thrilled through and through, from the pulse to the
 deep core,
That gazing he imagined how he heard,
Radiant trumpets whiter than white light,
Seraphic voices blown along the shrill
And starry arches glittering and keen,
With luminous music in the spacious Void
Of choral stars harmoniously rolled,
Coördinate with melodious adoration,
From the high throne to the thunderous Profound:—

One glorious consonance of sonorous love,
One thrilling volume of concordant strings
And holy harmonies from pole to pole.
Beyond all Space and Time his soul was born,
And wondering in itself, if Space and Time
With his own life should be wiped out and lost,
Annihilated as light is with the eye.
In the immortal spaces was no answer,
The stars with sleepless lids through myriad years,
Repressing the cold secret in the Void,
Balanced by law and geometric truth,
Smiled upon Plato as they smiled on him,
And know but will not tell. And now he felt
How all the sorrows of mysterious life—
Homesickness and departure and sad love—
Are but the loneliness of the single soul,
The separate one in the huge universe,
A premonitions dread of the isolation
In worlds to come when with this sensuous means
All contact between "You" and "I" shall cease
And human intermingling. His small love
Before these thoughts seemed vanished like a point
Engulfed in the huge carelessness of Time.
Up from the courtyard came a wanton laughter
Where the chief cook joked with the scullery-maid
And sounds of clashing pans and barrels rolled.
The trolleys moaned beyond the huddled square.
Far-off gaunt factory towers could be seen
Craning along the sky; with the sudden sense

Of human weakness in him there arose
 A thought of human weakness glorified.
 Pierced with the joy of a triumphant thought,
 His very heart in him rang 'round and 'round.
 He clasped his hands before him as in prayer.

'Mid all this universe of suns and stars
 Rushing forever through eternal voids,
 'Mid future generations, in ourselves,
 In natural forces, waters, thunders, winds,
 Fires and operations dumbly felt—
 The modern world to-be urging us on;
 Here in this graveyard of all vanished men,
 Luring us backward the dumb ages passed,
 In the long struggle upward from the brute,
 From vapors, planets, reptiles, higher forms;
 'Mid warring nations ringed around the globe,
 'Mid prisons, loathesome pestilence and crime,
 'Mid thundering traffic and on-rushing doom;
 Here in this never-fixed and altering All,
 Here in this moment between birth and death,
 Still may I lift her up by force of love,
 Higher than all these giddy, whirling wheels,
 Higher than all this misery of things,—
 O still to lift her up with all my love!
 Clasp her and lift her up beyond herself,
 And she myself beyond herself, that I
 Still lift her higher, till with shut wings and worn,
 Beyond all horror and beyond all fate,
 We close with love in the eternal Peace!

Thinking on all he had been and failed to be,—
His soaring thoughts and impulses profane,—
He leaned his head upon the metal sill.

And the loud city with her raucous voice
Granted him now one little space of rest,
Hallowing with grave peace her jarring tongues.

STARS

THE shining city seems a central light
Amid the radiance that the stars disperse,—
The populous city of the universe
Scattered in gold pavilions through the night,

The constellated abodes of the Creation,
A universal republic;—at the core
Of thronging suns and worlds forevermore
She radiates a fiery jubilation.

She, too, is throned and whirled upon a star
With streets that front along eternity;
She, too, is part, with the loneliest orb you see,
Of the radiant loveliness that flames afar.

WAITING FOR HER

He waited for her in the lamplit square,
Ere the enormous portals of the store
Into the tidal loveliness should pour,
Into the starry and the evening air,

Her weary workers eagerly enough—
The delicate girl-bodies that she drains,
(To feed the leisure of unlaboring veins,)
Of the dear energies of life and love,

And all that wanton wealth of womanhood
Framed for the sweet immortal miracle,
Prisoned like toiling bees within the cell,
With all their dear necessities subdued.

Trembling with lights and robed in shining veils
Of dusk and distance, like a fairy-land
The glittering city seemed, for lovers planned,
Of secret citadels and shining dales,

Of theaters and restaurants and cafés,
Her luminous Edens 'mid the stormy seas,
Full of ecstatic possibilities,
Dream-lost in distances of fairy-haze.

Now toil is cast off like a garment worn;
Hansom and cab whirl on into the gloom,
—A flash of draperies and faint perfume—
And some romance across the asphalt borne.

Yet none the less along the leafy Park,—
The little love-pairs have their wonted bliss,
And free to all is the heaven of a kiss,—
Or strolling arm in arm along the dark.

So, long he stood amid the shadow obscure;
Passed him the shop-girl and the débutante,
The young maid following,—faces worn and gaunt,
Glad faces, faces of the rich and poor,

Faces of women; yet the self-same spell
Of wanton life looked forth from each and all,
The ancient lure and challenge magical,
Careless and sane and bounteous and well,—

'Mid pain and poverty still flooding through,
Rearisen from the oblivion and the dust,
Forever well, life's old and vigorous lust,
And the old lure of life, forever new;

That raged between these boundaries like a tide
Of reckless waters' oceanic tone,
Washing with radiant warmth the waste of stone
And rocked with Beauty's storm from side to side.

O then he felt amid the rise and fall
Of the vast bosom the divine unrest
Of man and woman, in each living breast
The lovely secret making one of all!

The heart of victory throned in peace above,
The sacrificial heart of pain beneath,
Made one in the grave doom of holy death
And the divine necessity of love!

A WALK AT TWILIGHT

THE lamp-lit arch of the enormous portal
Through which the shadowy crowds seemed vaguely
blown
Like drifting ghosts, called forth by the immortal

First stars that on the westering house-tops shone,
Caught on its forehead the last glimmering breath
Of sunset, that dimmed flickering, and was gone.

Twilight descended, patient and serene,
Around them on the city hushed and wide.
With glittering lights all jeweled, like a queen

In sorrow laid at rest she looked, the bride
Of sun and moon and stars that come and go
Alternately, bearing beneath her side

The children of her harlotry and woe.
So through the darkened streets in quietness
They wandered arm in arm, content and slow.

Here stood the hospital of ghastly size
And walls austere and stoic to debar
And choke the sob within her and the cries

Of nauseate pain. One window gaped ajar
Like a bleared eye, strange contrast, where above
The solemn and seraphic evening star

In infinite peace and beauty seemed to move,
Low on the border of her gables hung!
O what of horror, death and wounded love,

So she can laugh and love me, and be young,
He thrilled with! But a baleful sadness crept
Over him like a shadow. Now she swung

Aside and toward some lighted window stepped,
Babbling with eager, earnest tongue the while
Plausible words, most charming and inept,

Over some model of the latest style;
A homeward hearse rattled over the stones,
When in the very moment of her smile

She turned to him with questioning eyes and sweet.
O youth and beauty in triumphant bloom,
When your glad body dauntless of defeat

With laughing eyes scorns the most somber doom
Set for us all, irrevocable and sure,
How shines life's glory in the spirit's gloom!

O breast with laughter filled and many a lure,
Singing defiance to the fates beneath,
With lips that mock at what they must endure!

As there she stood regardless of old death,
In beauty that of sorrow takes no heed,—
The cry of life swept through him in a breath;

As there she stood, adorable indeed,
Knowing so little of all learned sooth,
But better than himself his utmost need,

And remedies for all his baffled youth,
He struck from him at last the ancient fear,
Drowning in hers the grisly face of Truth.

Yet where they walked together, on all sides
Reached the old terror and vast tragedy,—
Madness and prisons, lusts and suicides

And the huge pathos of humanity,
Passions and hates and loneliness and crime,
And all the living hearts in agony

Beating together one terrific rhyme;
From thoughts that hurt and ponderings that pierce
He turned toward her now for the first time,

A refuge from the star-sown universe;
And with the sense in him of love more strong
Fell from his heart the insatiable curse.

So through the darkened streets they swept along,
While he caught up with eager, trembling breath
The words she hummed of some familiar song,
—The voice of Love amid the lands of Death.

RAINY SUNDAY

THE soft, gray garment of the rushing rain
Veils in the lonely, Sunday streets afar. '—
The passengers sit dumb within the car—
Slow drops slip wearily down the window-pane.

A funeral procession takes its way
Across the tracks, the car stands still a space,
All eyes are turned and every anxious face,—
Save one, that laughs oblivious of delay;

Holding her baby close against her breast,
The heart of love, too glad to comprehend,
And Life at war with Death until the end,
—The mother throned serene amid the rest.

SUNDAY MORNING ON THE AVENUE

Be what you will,
The vast humanity is unaltered still,—
Weary, or weak with shame,
Or buoyant with glad triumph, still the same
Pours on the human flood;
Carelessly to the evil and the good,
The well and the wounded soul,
Her tireless and eternal beauties roll
As from requickening sources;
Like the nightingales, or the stars, the high, kind
Forces
Make no division in twain,
But equally their bounty in sweet disdain
On all men born is shed.
On him who rises from the restful bed,
Or the bed of pain, on him
Fresh from the arms of love, or chambers dim
Of murder newly done,
The same humanity redawns; for none
Flags the eternal stress
Of labor and life, not with his weariness
She wearies, nor with his pain
Is wasted, but lo, careless and strong, again
Through street and shining square,
Radiant and regardless, everywhere
She pours a thousandfold,
Like the dawn across the world, her beauties as of
old.

Here down the avenue
The liquid sunlight runs like lightning through,
Look how the Sunday throng
Ripples and sways and surges all along
The valley of stately walls,—
Gay feathers and colors and tilted parasols,
Plumes nodding side by side,—
Through the dense street the carriages gleam and
glide
Idly, with loitering wheels
And silver trappings, and on the air there steals
The sense and the delight
Of human joy and contentment. Bare and bright
Shines steeple by shining steeple,
Above the churches gushing a myriad people.

Two eager girls,
With hair down over the shoulder still in curls,
Pass on with laughing eyes;
The street is full of questionings and replies
(What lips are smiling there!
What wordless answerings thrill and fill the air!)
And hints of marvelous things.—
Over the tumult move with shadowing wings,
With brightening wings there move,
The light and the shadow of ecstasy and love.

Now at last
The single soul forgets her grief in the vast

Gladness of mingling breath;
In the dear doom of all who pass toward death
And the shining miracle,—
The brave humanity, dreamless, shrewd and well—
O in the general doom
Of all glad, sensual pulses toward the tomb
Fearlessly beating by,
Splendid it is to live and glorious to die!

TRANSFIGURATION

WHEN goodnight was said and the last few words re-
uttered,

Fain he was to be gone, he knew not why—
Hurried and weary at heart, at her word no answer
Gracious enough of his own came for reply.

When silent against his shoulder she lay, nor loosened
Her arm from his neck clinging, a loose embrace;
With head bowed over his arm, in the shadows hidden,
He lifted her up. Love made holy her face.

THE CITY AND THE THOUGHT OF HER

THE city has many moods,
 —Centers of rolling life, and solitudes
 By squalid and empty square,
 Terrible reaches along the wharf-line bare,
 Hours of peace and quiet,
 Titanic moments when the roar and riot
 Rage, like the thunder heard
 'Twixt ponderous waters to the storm-wind stirred.—

Out of these changes all
 One thought spoke to his heart, from the first call
 Of whistles, at morning blown
 Across her adamant wastes from zone to zone,
 Satanic, when the spell
 Of dawn makes the cleft gorges terrible
 And dimly through the street
 Click the first hoof-heats,—to the gigantic beat
 Of her hammers in full sway,
 The whirring of the machinery of the day—
 The populous jubilation
 Of manifold life, the clamorous consternation
 Of struggle and strife, her streams
 Poured forth at noon, the droning and the screams
 Of motor and engine still
 Spoke to his heart one thought intelligible,
 Riveted in his breast
 With the riveting of girders east and west,
 And always everywhere
 Rising from all these forms the thought of Her.

No less when the noon-tide jangle
Dwindled into content, the drive and wrangle
And trampling of the crowd,
When only the huckster's voice is heard aloud
Through the long afternoon;
Or when, awakened as from a second swoon,
The city with delight
Tears off her robes of labor, and bare and bright,
With myriad lamps aflame,
Jeweled and crowned, into the evening air
Pours forth, weary but free
Her myriad children, and fierce and breathlessly
Circulates love and lust,
Beauties that heal and leprosy that rust,
Splendors and crimes and shame,—
The thought of Her was uttered; from the flame
And flare of her pavilions,
Blazing like lurid suns through her dominions,
Her dizzy and dreadful joy,
Her breathless raptures dazzling to destroy,
From the quest of man and woman,
From all the world of things sordid and human
She, being human, seemed
To speak through them into his heart that dreamed.
And so,
When her tumultuous motion to and fro
Ebb'd, and upon her floors
The thunder of weights and wheels, when darkening
doors

Quieted for a space
The terrible bosom shaken to its base,
From the silent avenues then
The thought of Her spoke to his heart again
All night, till like the night's
Faded at dawn the city's starry lights,
Till like the planets' even
Faded the luminous orbits of her heaven
Of traffic, in square and street;
Stamped on his heart with the stray harlot's feet
Down the stone desert, sent
Through all his soul with the last sound that went
Down the dusk of the last car,
And sealed at morning with the morning-star.

THE HEART OF THE WIZARDESS

LIKE an immense and monstrous wizardess,
From steel and stone by many a subtle spell
The city weaves the gorgeous miracle
Of life and death and radiant loveliness.

The flash of her electric strength along
A thousand valleys moves the moaning cars.
With her right hand she lights a million stars.
Her feet are in the footsteps of the throng.

It is her voice that in the silence clamors.
She moves a myriad weights and wheels around.
She whirls her fiery motions underground.
It is her hand that sways a hundred hammers.

Like an unwearying and vast machine
Her everlasting motions reel and run,
Her factories toil beneath the stars and sun—
Inexorable, immortal and serene.

Yet every beam and bolt by force and pain
Of some one living pulse was riveted,
The iron shapes about her desert spread
Are statues of the thoughts within a brain.

Theater, steeple, dome and dizzy wall
Are monuments to some relaboring will,
The thunderous arches of her temples, still
By Love are founded, or by Love they fall.

SHOP-GIRLS

THE store has closed, across from out the tower
 The clock strikes slowly. Down the stairway whirls
 A seething flood of wan and weary girls,—
 Eyes like worn stars, each face a faded flower.

Yet in the tired eyes and faces are
 What bounteous possibilities of grace
 For lovers in love's hour, in each face!
 Angels of life, freed with the evening star,

Into the city's thunderous wrath they stream,—
 Each with its secret wistfulness discontent,
 Its memories of dear rapture reverent,—
 The woman's longing, and the sweet, shy dream.

What destinies, what hopes are teeming here!
 Around each sacred form there seem to rise
 The ghosts of many lovers, hungering eyes:—
 What lives, what unborn angels hovering near!

Beauties and future destinies to live!
 Out of each separate face there there seem to shine
 What possible dear, kindnesses divine,
 Ah, what compassionate ecstasies to give!

They pass into the tumult and are gone;
And a slim harlot passes by with laughter,
(The ghosts of many lovers follow after,)
Dragging her haunted body on and on,—

A sad, lost angel in the abyss of hell,
Still bearing that old look of lovely grace
Brought from the native heaven on its face,—
The bounty, and the immortal miracle.

DISCHORDS

THEY walked together through the Park at twilight,
The empty benches stood out cold and hard;—
Now from the city the first arc-lights shone
And jewels on her forehead, a reward
For all her labors done.

The face of heaven was beautiful and breathless,
Like prophets shone the first stars in the west,
Like molten splendors in the haze around.
Deep in his heart, deep in his very breast
He felt a pang new-found.

He felt a love he had not known before this,
But the dumb future strangled it with terror,
A faintness filled him like a new disease.
The thoughts of his futility and error
Shrieked, drowning his peace.

When, like a ghost, a pitiful young harlot,
Hurried and hunted, passed them in the dusk
And vanished, leaving tragic all the air;
There, in the wake of perfume and of musk
They kissed, he with a prayer.

THE CHILDREN

In the Spring on the pavements of the city
The little children play marbles and laugh and
shout,
Their laughter is drowned by the city all about;
But they laugh back regardless of the city
And clap their hands and shout.

In the sunlight fading from the alleys,
The braided hair, and the short hair are bowed
Over a few soiled marbles; a watching crowd
Circles them in the noisy, dusty alleys,
Where the close heads are bowed.

From the river in the distance flowing
The whistles murmur,—the tired souls of men
Call to each other over the waters again,
Over the river in the sunlight flowing
Answer the souls of men.

When lamps in the street-ways glimmer,
Along the rooves the sky still burns with day,—
A little group watches them where they play.
And in the distance the long waters glimmer
With the receding day.

H E R

After the glare and hum of the café
They two within the hansom sat in gloom,
Whirling along the old, familiar way
As in a dream, toward some remembered doom;
And the mute city all about them lay
Deserted as a tomb.

And long-dumb sorrowings began to call
Within him, and a sense of loneliness
Unquenched by crowds and merriment and all,
Against her cheek and bosom felt no less;
Between them the inexorable wall
Of human separateness.

Till in the silences their lips grew near,
He felt how, clinging to him like a bride,
She shook with sobs and shuddered through with fear
Suddenly, as he caught her to his side,
"I love you, love you, love you—do you hear!"
Silently she replied.

DAWN IN THE CITY

THE long, long streets are desolate and blank.
The river-wharves beyond loom bleak and gray.
Through chilly vistas shining far away,
With blinded windows, the "Orphans' Savings Bank"
Catches the first, faint ray

Shot from the cloudy dawn, windy and breaking
Along the east, along the abandoned goal.
Far up the river the solemn whistles roll,
As if the souls of men from dreams awaking
Cried out to the world's soul,

As if the hearts of men cried out to Man;
Here in this breathless moment one at last,
In the deep terror before the dawn has passed
One soul, sad and alone, under the span
Of the terrible starless Vast.

And now in the strange fear before the day
The unsuccessful harlot's tired feet
Echo, strangely vehement, down the dumb street.
The sounds of drunken laughter pathetically gay
Reëcho and retreat

Between the deserted rows of gaunt, gray houses
And all the world is stiller than the tomb;
Only a shutter there in that darkened room
Opens, the first, white ray of morning rouses
The walls out of their gloom,

Showing a few soiled chairs and a faded picture.

The corner saloon in the last chill of night
Stands out, garish and windblown, cold and bright.
The arc-lamp swinging from the black iron fixture
Pales in the widening light.

And all the morning in my spirit, too,
Shines like a fiery sunrise, or a cloud
Shot through with dawn, as from a shattered
shroud,
My soul, with the white dawn shot through and
through,
Rises, singing aloud.

Till the new love within me, surging and mad,
Yearns toward all human things that here draw
breath,
The dawn and the gray city underneath,
So sordid, so ridiculously sad,
But grave with love and death.

THE TIDE

THEIR hands for a space
Touched, their lips together quivered and clung:
Heart on heart,
Breast on breast, and spirit on spirit they hung.

For the first time
They felt the onward force of the reckless tide,
The sullen flood
Sweeping hopes and fears and warnings aside.

Trembling they hung,
Shivering with ecstasies, visions and vague alarms;
Suddenly then
He would have turned. She caught him up in her
arms.

MIDNIGHT

LISTEN—the city lies as in a dream;
Now love, and sleep—the shadow of death begun,—
The three dear mysteries that make all men one,
Hallow the iron waste with peace supreme.

Through the long alleys emptied of their feet
What throb, what muffled groanings seem to rise,
From the mighty heart that hushed in slumber lies.
—The blinded mansions stare along the street,

Clotted with darkness, like strange birds of prey
Moth-winged and vast; like eyes the windows show
Blind and distraught, that stare out in a row,
Wrapt in enormous dreams the way.

Now the loving breast at the beloved breast
Resheds her holiest sacrifice of love,
Now the loved heart to the dear heart above
Lies overthrown in rapturous unrest,

These slumbering stones, these myriad rooves be-
neath;
Each in its narrow boundary, they lie
A million souls, each with its destiny,
Made one in the grave guise of temporal death.

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Now the soft web of moonlight is unfurled
And love wakes blindly in how many a breast;
O listen, from where heaven hangs starriest
Now God leans down with love across the world!

A shutter stirs there from the shadows deep,
And a pale woman leans into the night.
The moon wheels upward. From the steeple's
height
The clock strikes slowly:—midnight—love—and
sleep!

HIS DREAM

IN the thin ghostly sleep of dawn
When all we love so, seems
Beyond reality withdrawn—
He found her in his dreams.

Through a still forest wrapt in snow
At dusk of day he went
Hunterwise, with light foot and slow,
As one on booty bent.

When, like a phantom, though the sheer
Gloom forward, toward him came
A milk-white doe, half-filled with fear
He lifted, and took aim.

A flash—! And through the brightened air
He saw with hurt surprise
The fated bosom waiting there
And sacrificial eyes,

Patient with majesty of doom,
As one elect and sought
Unto his hand. So through the gloom
Forward, with tortured thought,

Half-triumphing he pressed—and lo
Stretched out upon the ground
And bathed in blood, for it was so,
Her very self he found;

With arms to take him back again
And lips desirous still.
Then a blind terror in his brain
Throned, and against his will,

With hideous pleasure, not his own,
Yet half, across her throat
Drew the sharp blade, but not a moan
Escaped it where he smote,

But the wet blood welled soft to rise;
She caught him with a kiss,
And all the fire in her eyes
Kindled and waned with his;

And from her very lips he drank
The very life out through—
And all the life within her sank
And wasted as he drew

To the last drop, and the dear head
As his own spoil he saw
Sink to the earth, her beauty shed.—
Then heaven with voices raw,

Crude janglings and harsh discords scraped
Rang 'round him; with mad feet
And suddenly, as one escaped
From a prison, in the street

Of a vast city he was set:
But ever more and more
Wailed the harsh voices 'round him yet,
Till to a deafening roar

It grew, and the agony from her face
Anywhere to be fled,—
For still he saw it in each place
Whither he turned his head.

Doomed with his soul to rise or fall,
He saw with mad surprise
In man and woman, each and all,
The sacrificial eyes

Look out at him; and when with rude
Caress, a harlot passed,
With a hoarse whisper, hideous, lewd—
In the dim light at last

Under the lamp-light, her embrace
Repulsing loathingly—
Into the tragic face obscene
He looked—and it was She.

Blind grief too unutterable to be wept,
Up some deep nerve of pain,
As with live pangs, all through him crept
And cut the dream in twain.

IMPRESSIONS OF HER

THREE visions of her in his heart he bore,—
Of her magnanimous and careless ways,—
Throned in his memory above the rest.

Once in the earlier days—the corridor
With one low lamp shines dimly as the time
Draws near for parting; the old solitude
And inarticulate longing of his youth
Rises within him slowly—on his lips
She reads the secret, bounteously spreads
Wide arms to take him to her heart again,
Gives him to share of her sweet wealth of life
Wanton and fearless, with brave beauty lures,
Laughing to see the gladness that she gives,
His sorrow back into her being's peace,
The compassionate kindness and the ruddy joy.

Deep in his heart another memory burns;
He sees the tumultuous street, the whirling ways
Of the unresting city, the small group
Ringed 'round the curb, where limp a figure lies
Red from the wounding car-wheels, that, to save
Her life of beauty imperiled, laid down his own.

Close on the pavement one disheveled kneels,
Desperate, bearing in her young, sweet arms
The sorrowful burden, and ever she bends down

Over the poor sad lips so writhed and wan
 And moaning with the red, insolent lips of life
 In holy pity; with her own loosened hair
 Wipes off the blood-stains, and across the breast,
 Too wounded and weak and agonized to know,
 Leans with the young, dear bosom well and strong,
 The wild, sweet strength of compassionate woman-
 hood,

Vital, a bulwark from death until the end.
 The slender spirit of life it seemed to be,
 Wondrous and lovely, sensual and sweet—
 Beside the faint, sick weariness kneeling there.

Or yet he sees her, as he was wont to see
 Perchance, by dusk in the city, 'mid flaring lights,
 Riot of sound and radiance, shrieks and cries
 Of whistle and gong, through the deep cañons whirled
 Of thunderous tumult, on some motor-bus
 Throned on her journey homeward,—eager, brave,
 A little figure that leans against the wind,
 Drinking with recklessness of parted lips
 The hurrying distance in, drunk with the rage
 Of the barbaric loveliness around,—
 Into the night beyond him swiftly borne:

An embodiment of the savage strength without,—
 The city's anger, pitiless, carnal, crude,
 Beautiful, riotous with the lusts of life,
 Bearing the primal compassion in its breast!

HYMN TO THE CITY

O MOTHER of many tears!
Mother of pain, whose iron bosom bears
Beneath the girdle line
A million hearts, temporal and divine,
Passionate with unrest!
Mother with the sword of ages in the breast!
Mother whose heart is stone,
Whose veins are iron, whose eternal moan
Sounds through the nights and days!
O Mother, unsung, unhonored, without praise,
Terrible, strange and dumb,
Thy bounteous strength not for all days to come
Flags, nor for all the scorn,
Laboring vastly on; but night nor morn
With the tenderness of grace
Touch the crude lines of thine unlovely face!

In the streets of upper light
Thy happier children live, in mansions bright
'Mid gilded and marble walls;
Their children fill with laughter thy upper halls,
With many a joyous shout,
Revel and mirth and gladness all about,—
(Nor them their gladness grudge).
But at their side their starveling brothers drudge
In the lower ways of slime,
Precincts of pestilence and abysmal crime,

Defiled and odorous dens,
 Vomiting mists and vapors like rank fens,
 In haunts of the strangled soul
 And life's joy blotted out. Yet through the whole,
 Freely, without regard,
 Thou pourest thy living life-blood for reward,
 Through realms of joy, or error,
 Life brimmed with peace, or life bowed down with
 terror;

From the foul and the pestilent springs
 Thou breedest up holy and reverent things,
 And Life and Love and Death
 And the sacred Passion. The lowliest scum beneath
 Still breeds divinities.

O Mother of the austere and tragic eyes!
 Mother victorious
 O'er death and hate! O Mother, thou art glorious!
 I love thee and I praise,
 Here with my heart I bless thee all my days.

Instinctive, crude and brave,
 Fierce with compassion, powerless to save,
 Thou bearest all along
 In thy vast bosom; but undivined and strong
 Within Thee lives and works,
 Within the darkness of thy womb there lurks
 The germinating Love,
 Whose pity shall burst a million chains and move
 The sides of hell apart,

And bind all men together heart by heart,
 And break all hates and bands,—
 Love with the eager and the wistful hands,
 Love with the stooping face
 To catch the whole world up in his embrace,
 Whether it would or no,
 Whose voice trembles for love, whose voice can blow
 A thousand walls to dust,
 Who runs to kiss with love hatred and lust:—

Hail—all hail!

I herald him, I sing, he shall not fail!
 (His trumpet is blown.) The lowliest
 Shall know his love, the highest and the holiest,
 All races and all portions;
 The vilest dejections, the most void abortions
 His hand shall heal, the brain
 Of murder, and the fumed and the insane
 And furiant; from the casement
 Of palace windows even to the basement
 Of the barred jail shall shake
 The thunder of his love, till men awake!

O Mother, whose weary womb
 Shall bear a new Christ to the world to come!
 Mother, austere, unknowing,
 Throned by the headlands and the waters flowing
 And on thy populous graves,
 Surrounded by the stars and with a million waves!

LAST DAYS TOGETHER

THE day drew nearer when they twain must part:
Ere midnight, through the luminous city's vast
And blooming wilderness, side by side, they
passed,—

He with the gray ghost clinging at his heart.

Her bounteousness, her great, glad ways of love
Careless and sensual, the exuberant wealth
Of her whole being's sanity and health,—
The mystery and the primal lure thereof,

Humbling his pride to the dear woman-ways,
Bowing his dream to the more lovely truth,
Through all the hungering caverns of his youth
Shot the fierce thirst and longing for her grace,

Her 'body's beauty, which even as a flower
That on the night-wind spreads her soft perfume,
Across the chalice of her beauty's bloom
To be wasted, lured Love on with lovely power,

Like a faint moth that trembles toward his goal;
Prisoned at last and satiate with excess,
Snared at the core of her deep loveliness,
Caught in the web of the sweet woman-soul.

Yet in his heart the deeper Love he bore
Shuddered aghast on the abysmal brink

Sundering between them, where Love's feet must
sink,
The abysmal gulf between them evermore

That some stray word or chance of hers laid bare—
Wounding his heart with sudden loneliness:
Nor was it possible for Love to guess
If aught of pain for the parting stirred her there.

Now with swift laughter, luring hands and sweet,
She drew him along the way, now was she dumb,
As premonitions of the dread day to come.—
On through the glittering vistas of the street,

They passed, the laughing heart, and the heart beside
Twixt fierce regret and ecstasy all dismayed;—
The opera for some gala night arrayed
Poured forth its human abundance like a tide—

Of idle faces, fair women, color and light,
Of flashing jewels, draperies, plumes, and sound,
Of murmuring tongues and laughter shed around,—
And soft luxuriance out into the night,

White locks, and faces of elder reverence;—
While here and there amid the lovely whirl
A will o' the wisp of some rare, delicate girl,
Virginal, shy with the first innocence,

Poised, like a dove, a moment, and was gone;
The champing horses restively stirred, and beat
The reverberant asphalt—from far down the
street

Whistles and cries to lure some carriage on!

What glorious, glad abandon, fierce and free,
Heartless and heedless, what ecstatic thrill
Here of life's reckless loveliness, the will
Here, too, of life exuberant to be!

So on the shimmering luminousness afloat,
The sumptuous city's everlasting stream
Of magical splendor, they passed as in a dream;
Till the quick pang, that struggled in his throat,

Stirred, and the wound deep down with many a
throb;—

Turned the dim corner into the huddled, waste
Desertion of the half-lighted street, with haste
He caught her against his bosom with a sob.

STREET-CLEANERS

WHEN through the midnight city void and vast
Sleep, like an angel, steals
Reverent, and from her avenues has passed
The thunder of loud wheels,

Through alley and street the humble army goes
Of cleansing and repair—,
The breath of washing waters and the blows
Of hammers in the air.

The wounds of living, the destructions worn
By toil, the scars of day—
A thousand tireless fingers without scorn
Silently soothe away.

In spite of the huge carelessness of Time
And Force, in spite of Joy
That takes no heed, in spite of hate and crime
That ravage and destroy,

The everlasting Forces, slow and kind,
With healing hands and sure,
Out of the filth of things obscene and blind
Refashion us the Pure.

Eternal Labor, like eternal Love,
The sunlight and the dew—
The lowliest street and the holiest star above
Daily rebuilds anew.

GRAY DAWN

ALONG the squalid street
Homeward he took his way with weary feet,
And in his heart a sense
Of weakness and self-hatred; where the dense
Mists of the morning hung
Over the old bleak wharf, he turned and swung
The corner along the ridge
Fronting the east, the sapped and bulging bridge
In the twilight's half-eclipse
Showed ghastly, the deserted and gaunt ships
In the dull morning air
Rocked sickly in the slime, despoiled and bare.

And now the day
Along the east began; from marshes gray,
From bog and oozy ground,
Flat wastes and sluggish fenlands that surround
The city's western close,
A breath of chill and damp, like fear, arose
Gradually; a hag
Skulking along the docks, in her little bag
Gathered out of the slime
Old cans and papers, and a sense of crime,
Of things dejected and cheap,
Into his heart like mists began to creep,—
The grinding ugliness
Of life on the dregs of being; and no less
Where the ornate saloon

Glared eastward with one lamp like a murky moon
 Filled him an aching fear.

Here—O here!

On the uttermost verge of morning, bleak and drear,
 In the twilight's van unfurled,
 In the waste dawn and terror of the world,
 Lest he, too, have a share
 In all the un-love and tawdriness, and bear
 His part but to destroy
 One tith of all the sad world's hoarded joy,
 So easy to tear down,
 So hardly raised with difficulty, and crown
 His debt to her with lust,
 To drag one soul more downward in the dust,
 Even her he loved; lest he
 Grow what he loathe at heart the most, and be
 An ugliness unclean,
 One effort more toward the obscure Obscene,
 One with the world around him, the twilight gray
 and mean.

So lovable is the good,
 So fain to lead us upward if we would,
 So patient and so wise
 Beauty and Truth and the infinite Sacrifice,
 (The everlasting Forces
 From opulent breasts replenish the world's sources).
 And the demonic, *No*,
 The blatant negative, and the overthrow

By Powers unsublime
Under the tattered flag of hate and crime
So despicably small,
There is no sorrow above this at all,
There is no pain above
Looking from Lust toward the large eyes of Love!

Almost he could have then
Hated the whole humanity of men,
All the old human blunder,
Her passions, like a snare to drag him under
Into her misery vast.
But now the morning of the heaven at last
Had smitten the dark, and white
Her glory on the city's enormous night
Struck swiftly, where he went
A sudden holiness shone with new content;
On tower and pinnacle
A hallowing radiance like a memory fell.
O the old human sadness!
The human weakness and the human gladness!
Patient and holy, touched with lust and love
And the white dawn above.

THE UNIVERSE AND THE CITY

The universe around the city's sleep,
Like an immense and intricate machine,
Revolves with glittering motions cold and keen
And wheeling orbits through the windless Deep.

Beyond the outposts of last light that shine
Sleepless along eternity's frontier
And the wilderness of heaven, beyond the sheer
Invisible hollows without name or sign,

World upon world, the inviolate reaches run,
Star upon star, forever strewn abroad,
With meteors whirling on the fiery road
Of their ellipse to realms beyond the sun.

The moral order of ascendant Beauty
Around her and beneath her and above,
The universe of motion and of love,
Of dust and atoms and eternal Duty!

THE EVENING BEFORE THE LAST

THEIR talk had been of parting, tears and fevers,
Voluble words and many a futile pang—
Outside half-hearted rain plashed on the pavement.
The midnight hour rang.

Something equivocal that she had spoken
Concerning them, the sudden way she laughed,
Showing the undreamed gulf that lay between them,
Wounded him like a shaft.

The corridor lay shadowy and murky,
Visible in the lamplight for a space,
Involuntarily as if in anger
He pushed her from his face,

So that she tripped upon the stair and falling
Slipped back into the corner, where she leaned
Silent, with little sounds of indrawn breathing,
Her face in the darkness screened.

He caught her up to him with sudden passion,
They clung together face by seeking face,
With lips on quivering lips they clung together
Locked in a mad embrace.

Madly they clung in pain and passionate pity,
Within them silent rose the hungering flame;
He heard, as from beyond the outer darkness,
Her voice, calling his name.

DAWN AND SORROW

FOR force of utter grief he fell asleep,
Closing his eyes upon the healing boon
Of the soft dark, and let oblivion keep
Vain sorrowings for the day to come so soon.

So breath on breath through the long hours of night
The silence flowed in slumber, till there rang
The first, few cars in the first windy light,
And the old grief awoke with a wild pang.

Stunned with the thought impossible to bear,
Mute, slow and sad, he lifted up his head,
Viewing in silence through a void despair
How the gray room shone cold about his bed.

The world lay hushed and terror-stricken—lo
Rose on the east, cloud beyond cloud withdrawn,
With tenderness, irrevocable and slow,
Vast, dumb, and hopeless, the familiar dawn!

THE LAST MEETING

THE shadowy and the tremendous multitude,
Wearing at heart the old, the human dream,—
The lust, the grandeur, the sorrow—like a stream
Bore down upon him in tumultuous flood;

Bearing him bounteous gifts, forever cast
Here, like wild waves, on the huge shores of Fate,
Of life magnanimous and compassionate,
Triumphantly, and the belovèd face at last.

A DANCE HALL

THE dance—the dance—with wild and whirling
bodies

They moved together to the tawdry tune,
He heard it in her dreadful, hurried breathing,
—To-night, to-night, and O to-night is soon!

The ball-room with its tinsel decoration
Shone with a radiance lurid and electric,
Beneath the balcony a feverish harlot
Surveyed the dancers, critical and hectic.

To-night—to-night—around them and around them
Reeled in a cloud the women and the men,
The orchestra throbbed with a shameful tremor,—
Another and another dance again!

The empty, squalid faces, and the figures
Of drunken men moved with a motion dreary—
The smoky air—dilapidated dresses—
Her smile was cruel and her eyes grew weary.

“Give me the glass, drink, let us drink together,
O sweet, I love you and I hate you, too!
What have you done to me with all your beauty,”—
Around the rim their lips together drew.

A wheeling meteor in his head of fire
Dazzled his brain with inner radiance thrilling,
A shriller music heard above the music
Through all his thoughts went shivering and shrill-
ing.

With twenty thousand suns of blaring brilliance
 Glared in his head the barren blaze of noon—
 The dance—the dance—with wild and whirling bodies
 They moved together to the tawdry tune!

Madder and madder whirled the dance, and madder
 The whirling shapes like Maenads to the moon;
 Madder and madder with the lights above them,
 They whirled together to the tawdry tune!

The lights grew dimmer and the music hurried,
 Dance, for the day is soon, the day is soon!
 The dancers wearied and the music wearied—
 O dance together to the tawdry tune!

O drown the other faces out forever,
 With *you*, with *you*, whirled 'round as in a swoon!
 O I will hate them in your arms forever!
 O dance and dance till morning turn to noon!

Suddenly waned the lamps, and all the music
 Went out like a light. A terror seized the riot.
 As in a dream he felt her close beside him—
 The city street loomed cavernous and quiet.

HOME

HURRY the horses over the stones
At last, at last—
O hurry the horses over the stones,
The bridge is passed!

The city sleeps like a charnel of dead
In a tomb of stone,
The world is dead, all things are dead,
But we alone.

Your eyes shine like a panther's eyes
Seen in the night!
Your eyes shine like a vampire's eyes,
Cruel and bright!

Your head is like a death's head, dear,
Pallid and grim,
Your cheeks are patient and chilly, dear,
In the shadows dim.

Look how the angel carved on the cross
Leans in the shade—
The shadow of night upon the cross
Makes him afraid.

O kiss me, kiss me with your lips
Till I go mad!
Your tears are bitter on my lips.
—I am not glad.

—GOOD-BY—

With weakening heart and knees he stepped within
 The hall-way of the lamp-lit corridor,
 And heard the clock click harshly as before
 Closing upon them:—all the outer din
 Faded forevermore.

“A last good-by” he whispered, with a smile
 Striving to hide his heart-beats coming quick,
 But on his lips a quivering, sharp and sick,
 Broke down the piteous effort; for a while
 Words huddled and thick

Struggled to leave him blindly, and then failed,
 “I cannot leave you”—there his utterance broke—
 A hoarse, new sound, dreadful, that seemed to choke
 His love. The silences around them wailed.
 Old memories awoke,

Calling their hearts a moment and were fled.
 “Never, never—” he whispered half-aloud.
 All the eternal seconds in a crowd
 Trampling her, she endured with humbled head
 Over his bosom bowed

And hands that seemed to plead with the To-morrow.
 O there he caught her lips up with his own
 Wildly, and all the inarticulate moan
 Within them grew to one great cry of sorrow
 Triumphant overthrown!

O locked in grief, for one fierce flash, above
 All sorrow and all grief they seemed to strain;
 "Never, never—I will not leave you again!"
 "Never" she yearned toward him blind with love.
 "O in this waste of pain,

"O we two in the vast of loneliness!
 O sweet, once to have lived before we have
 died——!
 Once—once, before I am gone," he cried——.
 As from across the world he heard her, "yes,"
 Gravely in answer sighed.

Æons of grief, unutterable, piercing, blind,
 Whole centuries of regret, never to be stilled,
 For things irrevocable and things fulfilled,
 Rolled back upon him flooding all his mind
 With that one word she thrilled.

Silent they clung there, mouth on tremulous mouth,
 From opposite lips drinking their own hot tears,
 A bitter draught of mingled hopes and fears.—
 Madly they drained, as if to slake the drouth,
 Of the approaching years.

He felt her breath come slower and vague hosts
 Stealing around them of old memory.
 Complaining from a bleak eternity,
 The voice arose of many little ghosts
 And souls longing to be.

RENUNCIATION

SILENTLY through the dark
 He followed her on tip-toe to her room,—
 Bursting the door caught her all breathless, clinging,
 Quivering in his arms—all in a gasp,
 "I love you—love you—love you, O my own—
 O you—!" Close through clenched, shuddering lips
 they drained
 Each other's breath in, reeled,
 And sank face forward, lying side by side.

The city slept;
 Only their hearts seemed storming the white peace.
 Far off a homeward car
 Moaned through the street and faded, and at last,
 With eyes solemn and grave from many fears,
 With weary joy they closed,
 Shameful and frightened; giving a little cry
 Of inarticulate love, she turned and stripped
 (O as a cloud stripped from the burning sun!)
 The garment from the panting of her breast
 And closed her eyelids sighing. Wild regret
 Sickened him struggling up from her—but low
 Sharp sobs of angry love and sullen shame
 Broke all her body, rising half she bowed
 And strained him to her fiercely, "Come—come—!"
 Quivering hid
 His face in bitter, bitter kisses—"Come!"

Then, "No"—he cried.

"O I cannot—O I love you!"—like a wail
 From some new self discovered, rent his lips.
 With infinite pain dawned on him the new love,
 With infinite pain and pity. O at last
 He felt her soul, so human, so divine,
 Out of the twilit terror of the world,
 (His for this space from all eternity,
 Reach helpless hands, and caught it up with love,
 Love in the end! The voices in his heart
 Of hunger and of longing, like angry waves
 Dwindled into a peace. He lifted her:
 At last the tumult and the sobbing ceased;
 Her silence told him that she understood.
 Night grew to twilight glimmering through the blinds.

.
 Long minutes thus they sat.

.
 Towards morning filled him a mysterious gladness,
 He drew her up with pity to his lips
 In a new kiss, no word was uttered then
 And yet between them something reverent spoke
 Above the dust of the years.
 Weak little weeping sounds
 Shivered her tired body's length, she leaned
 Brokenly on him,
 As for compassion in a great new joy.
 O then!

Knowing the words he spoke, he turned to her,
"I love you," and he saw she understood
Forever. It was dawn,
And thus they parted.

EARLY MORNING

Into the city and the air of morning
He stepped and felt the wind upon his face;
Up through his being welled a brimming joy,
Not all the fever, nor the weariness,
Nor his own little sorrow could destroy.

The pallid clouds hung low on the horizon,
Cold in the first flame of the widening day;
Through shadowy alley and through winding
street
There came a breath of ocean and the tides,
The asphalt had warm odors, wet and sweet.

And the great city, wistful in the sunlight,
Shone with a pathos terrible and tender,
A weary joy too patient to be glad;
He felt a thought touch the old human weakness
To a new beauty, lovable and sad.

The grandeur and the passion and the wonder,
The lust, the human longing, the swift crime—
Mixed with the thought of Her forevermore:
Steeple and factory and stony tower
Took on a look he had not known before.

While shop on shop opened a tawdry window—

Old garish pictures, jewels, crockery.

The vendor wheeled his cart along the square;
Faces of men and women hurried past him,
Each with its secret and its separate care,

Each with its memory of some radiant rapture,

Its possibilities of sweet compassion,

Sacred and lovely.—O as to a sea

A tidal love swept all his little grief

Drowned in the triumph of humanity!

The loneliness, the isolation vanished,

He felt the life in him at reconciliation,

Purged beyond passion, lifted beyond scars,

One with the common joy and general sorrow

Of all the hearts that beat beneath the stars,—

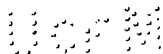
The world of men, so sordid, and so willful,

With beauties brimmed and many a lust obscene,

Carnal and careless, brave without a moan,—

And saved forever gloriously, not

Through fear of evil, but through love alone.



FROM THE COUNTRY

STAR beyond star and mile on mile withdrawn,
Seen from the country and the outer night,
Along the horizon the far city's light
Shines like a moonrise, or a luminous dawn.

Here it is breathless, all the earth is still.
Beyond night's shadow about the planet curled,
—The new Valhalla of the modern world,—
She radiates effort and unwearying will.

What silence broods along the country ways!
Meadow and wood and hill in starry peace
Dream in the silence of the great release—
The valleys slumber in the lingering haze.

O dawn of the world to be! Morning to come!
New light of the human love in breast and breast,
Rise—flood with trumpets all the east and west!
My heart rings herald, though the lips be dumb.

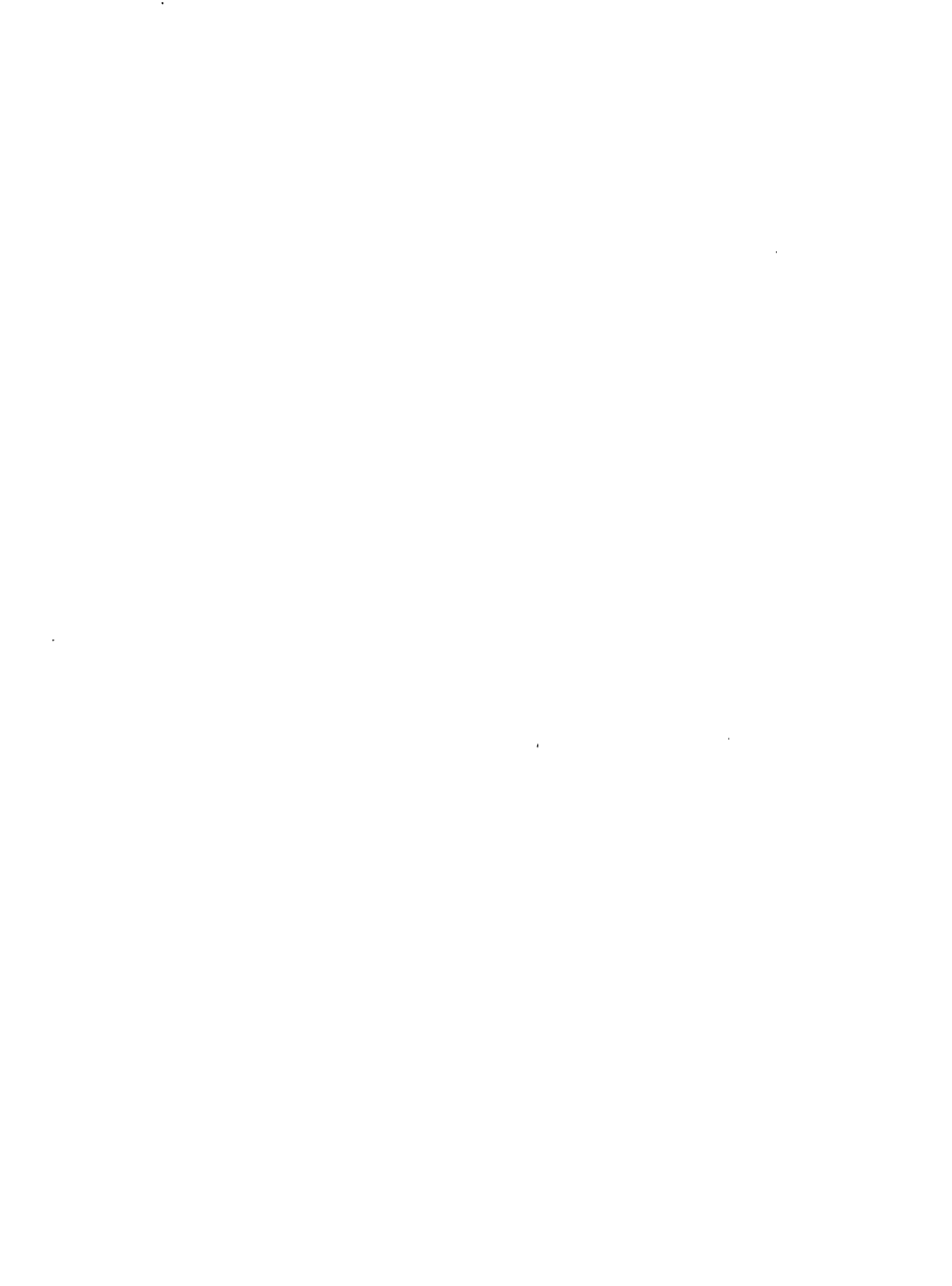
O future Christ, my feet run on before!
Mankind, or creed, or scarred iconoclast,
Rise—fill our faces with the battling blast!
—His trumpets loose my lips forevermore.

1910

OTHER POEMS

TOWARD midnight draws the silence. Look, the
lights

Fade out from room and room: the city lies
In the dim hour 'twixt ecstasy and sleep!
Now love wakes blindly in a million breasts,
And God leans down with love across the world.



SUNDAY EVENING IN THE COMMON

Look—on the topmost branches of the world
The blossoms of the myriad stars are thick,
Over the huddled rows of stone and brick
A few, sad wisps of empty smoke are curled
Like ghosts, languid and sick.

One breathless moment now the city's moaning
Fades, and the endless streets seem vague and dim;
There is no sound around the whole world's rim,
Save in the distance a small band is droning
Some desolate old hymn.

Van Wyck, how often have we been together
When this same moment made all mysteries clear,
—The infinite stars that brood above us here,
And the gray city in the soft June weather,
So tawdry and so dear!

A BENCH IN THE PARK

HERE where the Park is still,
Here where the city's roar
Fades, and we have our will,
Love me, and love me more,
Leave me and love me still.

Hold me and draw me near
Close to your hiding breast;
When in your arms I hear
All your heart's vague unrest,
Plunging through year and year,

All the glad pangs of breath
Drawn by the breasts of men
Fill me, and underneath
Stir the mute strings of pain,
Strive the strong chords of death.

THE STREET

The glare of lights and sound of many feet,
And Cinera is going down the street.

The bodies of dead love and born desire
Cling to her clinging like a furious fire.

The voices of dead love and angry Fate
Are in her ears—the voice of them is hate.

Mad, thirsty mouths strained up from the abyss—
Whose mouth was it that cooled them with a kiss?

The sorrow of some uninspired face—
Who filled it with strange fire for a space?

You hungered and she gave of what she had—
Was it not sweet? What if the end be sad?

The thinkers and the preachers and the gods
Cry out against her in their periods.

The thinkers and the preachers and the priest
Have scourged her with the scourging of a beast.

The teachers and the preachers and the sage
Cry out at her, and all the people rage.

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With fevers and with hopes since life began
They seek to feed the holy heart of man.

They murmur and they pass away again;
But she is still, she knows the hearts of men.

The glare of lights and sound of many feet
And Cinera is going down the street.

PREMONITION

LISTEN, about us all the Park lies soundless,
One arc-light shines there through the leaves that
hide,
Beyond reaches the city waste and wide;
Dear love, what is this fear perverse and groundless
That draws me from your side!

The spotted deer fret at the iron railing
Curving before us, where their quarters are,
Close by the bench we sit on; from afar
A panther's angry cry wanes with the wailing
Moan of a trolley-car.

O for a space the wonder and the pity
Of all things flash upon my spirit now,
—The cloudless heaven, weighted with stars and
low,
And the gay crowds and glittering, gray city,
Row upon shining row!

A higher dream lifts me from you forever,
I wander seeking through the starry plain,
Beyond your arms and all the ancient pain;
Never shall this thing be again—ah never
Shall this thing be again!

WHISTLES AT NIGHT

At night in the city when the far-off whistles blow
I think of you, far-off in the dark and the night,
And the old days come back of our young delight
So long ago.

I remember the evening we parted forever at last,
The long, dim aisles of trees in the lamp-lit Park,
The windy houses that huddled, chilly and dark,
On the twilit Vast.

And even the sound of a newsboy's voice in the street
And a rattling car, in that moment of exquisite
pain,
Burned themselves like odors into my brain,
Sharp and yet sweet.

Because we knew it must be forever and aye,
We would laugh, we said, to make it a little thing;
I remember your voice, how your laugh had a curious ring
Not wholly gay.

The old dear way of moving your shoulders had—
And when you had turned away for a little while,
How you turned back with a last, brave ghost of
a smile,—
But not glad, not glad!

At night in the city when the far-off whistles blow
I think of you, far-off in the dark and the night;
The arc-lamp out in the street flares dizzy and
white,
And the dawn comes slow.

POETRY

WHEN from the room I come where all day long
The voice has whispered meanings to my ear,
When from the darkened and still room I come,
When from the beautiful embrace I rise
And press into the twilit street—how strange
Breaks on my soul, as on one newly risen
From Lethe, or from love, all faint, and fain—
The outer faces and the joy of things!
From the terror and the pang and the surprise
Then, and the isolation of the soul,
From the huge dreams that follow day and night,—
Laved in her crowds as in a cleansing flood—
Beneficent, she takes me back again,
My "sane and sensual humanity."

THE NEW CHRIST

AMID the jarring of the city's wheels
And whirring of machinery on its course,
I feel a vast, inexorable force
Behind the thunder, that the sound conceals.

The harlot's laughter down the empty street,
The drunken revel and the pauper's hearse
Echo the ancient and malignant curse,
I hear it in the sound of many feet—

An ominous anger of foreboding things;
Within the solitudes of steel and stone,
The factory's whistle and the trolley's moan—
A somber voice of mighty warning sings.

The voice that cried in Athens and in Tyre,
That rang in Rome before Lucretius died,
The voice of one that in the desert cried,
"Prepare the way!" and dumb fell lute and lyre.

The sullen and the holy heart of man
Cries out again before the approaching doom,
From tottering temple and from rotting tomb
The truth emerges that with God began.

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The ancient truth, too simple for a word,
Holier than love, and common as the clay,
Labors again through darkness into day;
Within the silences a sound is heard,

“Till a new Christ be born out of the dust,
Build up your walls and towers as you will,
Before His voice the roarings shall be still,
Your idols shattered and your ruins rust!”

MEMORIES OF THE CITY

THE sound of the organ-grinder here by the dunes,
With the bright sea and beaches all around,
Wakes in my heart a melancholy profound;
The wheezy melodies and old, cracked tunes
Have a remembered sound.

I seem to feel the city's roar again—
The Park—the benches—the electric light
Far down the pavement burning cold and bright,
The avenues and winding parkways, when
The trees are black with night.—

The sidewalks in their empty loneliness,
And just beyond tall buildings, dark and dread,
With one star visible when you turned your head,—
Your laughter and your gaudy little dress
And all the words you said.

In the full noontide quivering and quick,
'Mid all this beauty splendid and supreme,
How pitiful these tawdry memories seem,
Like a forgotten perfume, faint and sick,
Or faces in a dream.

Alas for dreams that wander under heaven,
Old, futile memories of the foolish years,
Full of ridiculous old hopes and fears,
So sordid and so commonplace, not even
Tragic enough for tears!

THE MAD-MAN

'Twixt dawn and the cool stars serenely spread
In wide array o'er heaven's winnowed west,
'Twixt night and light the glimmering city lies,—
Now a million breasts at the belovèd breast
Reshed their sacrifice,
God's love in showering light across the world is shed.

Now the loved heart unto the loving heart
Lies overthrown under a million rooves,
And on a million lids sleep lies like dew;
From the fellowship of love and slumber moves,
As at each dawn anew,
Each separate soul refreshed to tread new ways apart.

But for myself another day has birth
Of isolation and of loneliness,
Shames and dumb agonies too fierce to tell,
The searing brand of my most weak distress
That makes each hour a hell,
Each footstep a despair I tread across the earth.

For by some inward error and accurst
The gracious glances of the human eye
To me are as barbed arrows of keen death
Intolerable, wherefore aghast I fly,
Ever with trembling breath,
The loveliness for which deliriously I thirst,

Fainting before the source of all that longing;
 Like a wild beast in covert of the dark
 Secret I slink and lonely as a ghost,
 Or with averted eyes that none may mark
 Amid the throng, the most
 Lonely of all I move, a specter 'mid that thronging,—

The loneliest, yet most eager to be loved;
 For thus to me the healing glances mild
 Forevermore are closed and shut away
 Of man and woman and the little child—
 Ah, though by night and day
 With such delirious thirst my baffled heart is moved!

Ah, for amid a million souls alone,
 Lonely I move among the ways of men,
 Lonely I lean at the beloved breast!
 Howso I seek to banish it, again
 The terror, the unrest
 Falls between you and me, some barrier unknown.

O death, of all wild wishes most desired
 Always of all men after love and sleep,
 The three dear mysteries that make all men
 one!—
 Take me forever to your heart, to keep,
 Close to your heart, where none
 May mock my loneliness with love; for I am tired!

SOME years it is, dear angel of my youth,
 Since first I lost you, many years ago—
 Dear angel, liberator of my youth
 From the dim caves of dream wherein she lay.

For from myself my very self you freed
 To all she longed for, all she loved the most,
 Generously, and with you loveliness
 Showed me how much more perfect than our dreams
 The commonest Actual is: yea, with yourself,
 Your very presence, sensual, wild and well,
 Dreamless and shrewd,—a flash of the radiant
 strength,
 Carnal and careless, in the common breast
 And glorious of humanity at home,—
 Your young, sweet body's bounty and common-sense
 Of shameless life, healing all sickliness,
 Healing all dreams with the more lovely Fact.

Forever reckless and forever well,
 Luring with pitiless lips that laugh and sing
 To the great, sensual fundamentals, the harsh
 And strengthening springs of loveliness that cleanse
 From little thought and all the maze of thought,
 —Through sweet self-loss and sacrifice self-slain,—
 You came to me and I knew you for my youth,
 That was to drench me in the bitter brine
 And quickening wave of life. Even as swift
 You passed, like a flash of lightning in the Spring,
 Beautiful, brief, and from my arms I felt

My youth ebb out forever, and I wept.
 For you were all the youth I ever had.
 Backward I sank into the web of dream.

But oft even now among the city's ways,
 By gaudy square and hub-bub of huddled street,
 Through all the sordid and sacred ways of men
 And common haunts, whereof yourself was born,
 There comes a moment:—when in the garish night
 By flaring theater the crowd sweeps by,
 When in the noon-tide buffet and unrest
 The reckless ocean of laughter and of tears
 Superb with pitiless strength rolls on, or yet
 Along the deserted wharf-line, when at dusk
 Only the huckster's voice cries out afar,
 I feel your presence, breathless and passionate there,
 Not without pathos, move as in days of old—
 —A flash of the sane humanity strong and well
 Reaching around me,—pitiless, tawdry, brave,
 Full of unsubtle ardor, but O how dear!
 And bountiful with excess of lovely life.

Ah, then I listen and hear as in a dream,
 Amid the chords of the rapture and pain and joy
 Of all things human (of which you were but a note)
 Common and fearless, tragic and rough at best,
 But touched with the solemn tones of love and
 death,—

With wanton exuberance and immortal lust
 The music of life welling up, strong and clear!

IRMA

I HAD a dream, a bleak and dismal dream—
I dreamed I loved a woman, that I loved
A dear and radiant woman, but I found
She whom I loved could never, never love me,
Though blithe she moved about with tender eyes,
So long ago herself had fled away,
All that I loved so long had fled away.
Surely I loved a living, breathing corpse,
Loved a most ravishing and radiant corpse.
Ah, let my heart break here, along the page,
Though it were but a dream!

Once through the aisles of a gigantic city,
When twilight washed her cañons gray with gloom,
I wandered in a dream, and still I sought
One that I loved, for an obscure, remote
Rumor and a foreboding dark as death
Had touched my heart, and for her heart I longed
To pour it out there,—all the pain, the fear,
The wild suspicion and the blinding doubt
Her lips should quell; most desperately I sought
Her, who alone could silence in my heart
The voice of terror; in my loneliness
For the girl eyes I hungered, and the face,
For the arched brows, and mouth so grave and small,
Full of sweet words: long at her door I stood
But none replied; so through the streets I roamed

Seeking one soul. Ah, sun and moon and starlight
 Unto my life she was, both day and darkness
 To awaken and console,—the very heart-beat
 And central spirit of the city, that shot
 Through all her ways and wastes of steel and stone
 And human faces thronging the warm life
 Of love, which made all holy, the one thought,
 Which made all reverent to me and sublime,
 Beautiful in her memory! So I roamed.

Dark were the avenues and darkly loomed
 The colossal mansions lined along the way.
 Desolate with some strange, abortive terror
 And precedent they seemed, most dark and strange,
 Touched with the low, last light. Dandy and fop
 And many a face full of obscene content
 Passed by me in my dream, the uninspired
 And thirsty faces of blank wealth, sad eyes
 Of man and woman, children laughingly
 That frolicked along the dusk with nurse and maid,
 And hoary figures pacing through the gloom,—
 Faces of the debauched and satiate,
 Gay equipages rolling on hushed wheels,
 Feathers and sleek attire, and here and there
 Brows of inspired innocence, some girl
 Hastening through the twilight, grave and pure,
 Passed me,—all lovable, the obscene, the pure,
 The triumphant and the tremulous seemed, yet all
 So lonely, so divided each from each!—

And a strange loneliness upon me fell.
So that I pressed with footsteps hard and hot
As my own heart-beats, ever, ever on.

Down the titanic alleys washed with gloom
Fain as a ghost I fled, past church and dome,
Enormous precincts of conglomerate souls,
Rivers of faces; yet in every face
Still there was lacking what I sought the most,
One face.—O and the loneliness, the fear,
The strange foreboding and the dismal fear
Rose in me like a sob, not all the stream
And Lethe of sane faces could wash out,
Nor voice of little children tumbling by!
Dark was the valley of on-rushing souls,
Lampless the windows of the mansions loomed,
The tremendous mountain of void mansions loomed.
Loneliness like a phantom lured me on.

And now at length, I came to the lower ways
Of toil and traffic, the huge dissonance
And choral clash of regions thunder-zoned
Neared on my soul; like motions of the sea
And oceanic heavings east and west
Heard by some lone adventurer, ere he sight
Over some crest her wave-ways, on me dawned
The riot of the tumultuous city's storm.
Turning the corner, on my sight it broke,
Where one long avenue into heaven's red

And molten sunset blended,—and a star
Burst flashing forth over the crested wave
Far-off of reeling houses, flashed and shone,
Like the sweet soul of Her above all souls
Shining, and with a myriad memories rose
Pure into heaven's cloudless chambers. Then
As kindling from its fire, the thought of Her,
The city's planets one by one took flame
Contagious, and the wilderness bloomed with stars,—
A dizzy labyrinth of flaming jets
And moving fires of orbic traffic whirled
Ever in varying motions; till a flood
Of radiance o'er the city swept, the thought
Of Her, and, like a gigantic lyre, all
Its titan harmonies smote one blinding note
Of discord, jangling the one thought of Her,
Distorted in my spirit and out of tune,—
Clashing the ominous, sad thought of Her,
The blank foreboding and the dismal fear.

Into the faces pouring on I pressed,
And chaos of electric orbits woven
By trolley and motor, bus and equipage,
Down the steep cañons ever narrower,
Shrieking with light, echoing from afar
Amid her general thunder the low calls
Of horn and gong, into the torrent's rage
Of murmuring souls and sibilant sound of feet
Ever insistent moving to one tune

Like sea-waves over a sand-bar, through her flood,
 Past theater and restaurant and café
 Blossoming idle faces, ever on
 —Faint with one thought,—through the colossal
 gorges,

Down the deep fissures rhythmical with the storm
 Of the waters of traffic and living bodies whirled
 Ever, like leaves through some close mountain pass,
 To ponderous thunder that his foundations jar,—
 Seeking one soul, with footsteps hard and hot
 As my own heart-beats, I pressed ever on.
 Filled with a fierce and a foreboding terror,
 Ever I pressed, with footsteps hard and hot
 As my own heart-beats, ever, ever on.

Already the pleasure-seekers on their quest
 Slipped past me, and motors, on stealthy tires borne
 Over the asphalt glided, so I plunged
 More desperately, still seeking for one face,
 Into the torrent of on-rushing souls
 That bathed me 'round. Ah, all that loveliness
 And tangible beauty from my soul could bathe
 Not the dark fear that shadowed it, nor all
 Those faces slake me, thirsty for one face!
 For nowhere might I find her, yet I loved
 In all some memory of her; yea, the city
 Seemed but a body of which she was the soul,
 And every living soul, a word from her
 Sent to me as symbol;—on they streamed

Bearing me tidings,—O but strange and dark
 Seemed they, and to my spirit omens dark
 They bore of dismal terrors strange and dark,
 Dreadful forebodings! Ever, ever on
 I pressed; the weary laborer, kit in hand,
 Passed me, the man of business on his way,
 Strange faces of anxious women. . . .

And now the stream

I breasted, of whirled spirits, wearier grew,
 More sorrowful to see. On the lower ways
 Where the high cañons shallowed, and the lights
 Grew drearier, garish, murky like worn moons,
 'Mid tattered shops and crossways gaunt and bare,
 Somewhat the flood abated; passed me then
 Pale anguished men with gray and baleful faces,
 Lust-haunted faces, wandering ever on,
 Like souls forsaken, henceforth doomed forever
 To drain one pleasure which themselves abhor,—
 One worn, monotonous and hideous pleasure;
 Beggars and prowlers passed me, here and there
 Strange women smiling but with weary lips
 Made straight for torture, edged to murder love—
 Tragical faces,—and young, wan-eyed girls,
 Sad fallen angels from the heaven of love,
 Wasting seraphic bounties in the mire,
 Heart-breaking parodies still fain to ape
 The remembered look of that old gift of grace
 Once caught in heaven. So that at last the fear

And dismal, dumb foreboding in me strangled
All hope of seeking, and my heart cried out,
Cried from the waste, "O city, give me back,
Give me the woman that I love! O give!"
No voice returned in answer; but I pressed,
Ever I pressed with footsteps hard and hot
As my own heart-beats, where, the corner turned,
Flashed a bright hall with lanterns lit ablaze,
And in my dream I saw her whom I loved
Pass with loud laughter, 'twixt two pallid men,
Into the house. Faint music filled the air.

Faintly I clambered up the stairs and stood
Faint, where the dancers in the lighted room
Reeled to a tune ridiculous and gay.
I saw the face most beloved in all the world,
Flushed and disheveled in the whirling dance,
'Mid abject faces of pale, slavish men,
Loathsome with laughter, hideously move,
Reeled to a tune ridiculous and gay.
As in a dance of corpses so they moved,
Coarsely and sad, with laughter of dead lips
And stony eyes. I saw the eyes I loved.
I saw the darling body and beloved.
The music chattered with insane delight,
The heart of the music broke for sad delight
And wilted slowly, and my heart that broke
Burst with a sob indignant and a cry,
"She is not of them, they have dragged her here.

See how she moves an angel among apes,
Ah, painfully, an angel among apes,
Reeled to a tune ridiculous and gay!"
Rushing I caught her up against my side.

Then in that moment turning there I looked,
And like the other faces was her face,
The face I loved the most in all the world.

Faded the beauty from her eyes, and all
The old sweet wonder faded from her eyes;
One with the rest, self-conscious, hollow, dead,
She stood there, all I loved in all the world.
She leaned there aping little ways of love,
And through her breast I saw the worm within
Close at the empty heart. Without a sob
I spurned her, and she vanished with a cry.

O, I love a ravishing and radiant corpse,
I love an empty and most radiant corpse.
All that I love in all the world is dead!

Dark were the streets of the enormous city
And dark her midnight alleys, dark and dumb
Stared out the blinded windows in long rows
Of sleeping houses. Dead the city lay.
Dead were the stars in heaven, dead the eyes
Of the few baleful ghosts went hurrying by,

Sad ghosts of men and women hurrying by—
Only my feet made havoc with the hush.

O, I love a ravishing and radiant corpse!

Silent the asphalt glittered in the night
Along the alleys, and a shutter there
Opened, a woman leaned into the night.
The clock chimed from the steeple. A pale man,
Some pallid ghost, furtively staring stood
Where the ways crossed. Ah, dark your eyes were
sweet,

Tender your eyes were, full of twilit hope
As dusk ere morning, tender were your eyes,
Often have I beheld them closed in love
More softly than the soft, closed eyes of death
Folded forever! Like a titanic tomb
Of many chambers, each a charnel-vault,
A waste of graves the gigantic city lay,—
A huddled waste of monumental tombs
And statues of dead grief; while like a ghost
Revisiting old haunts once loved so well,
Revisiting old haunts, lonely I roamed
Beneath the baleful glare of flaring lamps,
Through the dim vistas of eternal tombs
Row upon row. Dead lay the city's vast
Marmoreal desert. Dead were the stars in heaven;
Out of them all was fled the soul of love,
Out of them all.

EPILOGUE

HAIL all life everywhere,
 Ocean and earth, stars, clouds, and bounteous air,
 Forever, all living things!
 For the last time on unreturning wings
 In my song, my very soul
 Slipped from your leash, winged willingly toward
 its goal,
 Mounts heavenward like a star.
 All men that have been and all men that are
 Hail—and all men to be
 Hail! Ere my lips be closed eternally,
 Ere the last word be said,
 Triumphant arising as one already dead,
 In my song I run to meet you
 For the last time, touch you, and love you, and greet
 you,

Whirl upwards, flicker, and fail
 In a shower of singing love. Hail! Hail!

Ah all my life alone,
 Though moving among loved faces, at heart alone
 And like a ghost I have moved.—
 Yea, even at the heart of the beloved
 In the moment of silent speech,
 Fell the dark veil dividing each from each,
 The lurking loneliness
 And isolating mystery felt no less;
 Even in the running throng

Loneliness followed like a ghost along,
And the fierce voice that cried
Deep in the breast, not ever to be denied—
The torture of the unexpressed
By day and night wounding the baffled breast,
The inarticulate thirst
For utterance, breaking the bosom till it burst
Into flower, with song for bloom:
In the quiet of night into the sleepless room
Break the insistent dreams,
Suddenly, out of the web of the world that seems
I am lifted as in a trance
Into flower, with song for bloom:
Of a sudden the moon grows pale
Under a shifting cloud, the somber veil
Sunders between us, where
Is the face beloved?—deep loneliness is there;
Shut away, folded apart,
I am divided from the beloved heart
Forever, lifted above
In a rapture of love out of the arms of love!
Thus ever through many ways,
Through many sleepless nights and dreamful days,
Even as a spirit I passed,
Sent among men and things, still, first and last
Separate from all the rest
By the voice of the errand forever in my breast
Urging me toward one goal
Beyond them, and cleaving my soul from every soul.

Thus on me, so
Become a mouthpiece for the immortal woe
To moan through, thus on me
Become a nerve for the world's agony
To creep on, and a voice
For all glad things to speak through and rejoice,
The hungering discontent
Fell, of mine own most utter banishment,
With longing doomed to rove
Lonely amid the world of light and love
And laughter; not to be,
Yet sing his joy that loveth, where the sea
Of the gay crowd moves on,
A crag for Beauty's wrath to break upon
In music; to behold,
Dream-sundered, where the lovers coin their gold,—
A string to tremble under
The smiting shock of their most tender wonder
Lonelily; and the laughter
Of little children to go wondering after
For Beauty's sake; to miss
The common joy, the clasp, the earthly kiss
Forever: all my heart
Grown as a bearing dream-bride shut apart
For the whole world, to grieve
At his least touch and at each touch conceive
In sorrow. Thus there fell
On me the most transcendent miracle
And loveliness of all,

That drew me down upon my knees to fall,
To triumph and forgive,
In adoration of all things that live.

But now at the journey's end,
Throned here above my sorrows, I comprehend
In a sudden flash. I see
How all I have loved were but as symbols to me
Sent, of some truth afar
Burning unseen: the morning, and the evening-star,
Twilight and dawn, the face
Of lover, and friend, the sorrow, the wild embrace
Clinging of love, the strife,
The pang, and the triumph, each life that with my
 life
Touched, but as prophets sent
I see, and as hints to my soul of some great event
Beyond, but as voices in a dream,
The tempest and turmoil, the tumult of things that
 seem,
Or as parables to my soul,—
Which through all these like a spirit winged to its
 goal
Was driven, to reap and record
Out of their tangle, with song for a swinging sword,
From the surfeit of appearances to reap
The fruit of the veritable beauty, and hidden and
 deep
Under all veils to read

And sing the fundamental Actual, hidden in the deed,
 Hidden in the word. Which undismayed
 Having fulfilled, the inexorable voice obeyed
 Within me, having lived, having loved,
 Having shed my spirit in song, her longing is re-
 moved,

Summoned to a dawning sphere;—
 With a last song I love you and greet you here,
 Touch you, and love you, and depart,
 With a last song shed back from the singing heart.

Now all I have loved and known
 Seems to ebb back and leave me all alone,
 Now all I have known and loved
 I seem to see as one from afar removed.
 Rapt, in triumphant peace,
 A dawning loveliness gives my soul release
 That solemnly retires
 Slowly withdrawn, down the long aisles and choirs
 Of the morning's temple, passed
 Out from among all men and things at last
 With reverence dumb, and crowned
 And robed with a most majestic joy around.
 As one already dead
 I rise to the new task that waits ahead,
 And the dark weight of things
 Slips from my disembodied love, that sings,
 (From the outer modes set free,)
 Into the splendor of Reality.

So here now in my song
For the last time I trail my robes along
Of sorrow and joy, the train
Of my love behind me drawing, I move again
Through the old haunts, withdrawn
Solemnly, slowly, down the long aisles of dawn,
For the last time. Soft sleep
Lies on the face of the world and the shadows deep
Of the city bathed in gloom,
That reaches around my progress like a tomb
Desolate; with hushed breath,
In the triumph of sleep as in the triumph of death
All souls repose; ah, now
Sleep has made all men one, on the wearied brow
As on the glad brow is shed
Her holiest mystery, lust and hate are dead;
Now the pain-giver and the pain,
The lover and the beloved, the slayer and the slain,
The wronger and the wronged, for a space
Reverent, beyond all these meet face to face,—
Sorrow and joy;—now lie
A million souls in the great mystery
Purged, as in death or love:
Into each room I steal and pause above
The spirit in each for a space
With a last prayer. Over the quiet face
Of the young girl I bend,
Sacred in sleep, and with longing lips descend

To the pale face, that lies
 Pure in soft slumber, of the worn harlot with eyes
 Gravely at rest, alone—
 Solemn and lovely,—and where the sad lips make
 moan

Of the lunatic in his dreams,
 I touch my lips. I slip with the morning's beams
 Into the death-cell dim
 Of the murderer's rest, bending my lips to him,
 Laying my cheek to his
 In wild regret,—“Brother, this is my kiss
 Ere I depart.” And where
 The child sleeps sweetly disheveled with flowerlike
 hair,

And the old man, and the breast
 Of the laborer heaving softly in tranquil rest,
 I stoop. With limbs interwove
 Two lovers lie in the last embrace of love,
 Quiet and loveless now.—
 O there my kiss falls too, and on the brow
 Of the poet, where he lies
 With lips still apart for the word from Paradise,
 Like moonlight I glide and fall
 O'er all the sorrowful mystery and all
 The strength through which Beauty speaks
 To the whole world, the sorrow on which she wreaks
 Her loveliness and despair—
 The singer even as the lovers,—for here as there

Is beauty laboring for birth,
The future laboring for life. Till o'er the whole
earth

My love is poured like rain,
On monarch, and priest, and the sailor on the main;
And lastly on the beloved,
With a new kiss. But now my spirit is removed
Ever from all these. I ascend
With rapture of ecstasy to meet the end.

Farewell!—

My own words summon me like a warning bell.
Already far away
Seems all that my laboring spirit strives to say,
As to one already dead.
What I have said I know not when it is said,
Nor whence I am borne nor whither—
All memoryless from Death my song blows hither.
All that I loved before
And lost, returns to me now forevermore.
All that I loved the most,
And here for an unenduring moment lost
Floods back upon me, bends
With sorrow of pity to lift me up, descends
Out of the widening Vast
All I have loved to lift me up at last.
All that I sang, or sought
Sweeps back upon me with solemn beauty fraught
Of thrilling ecstasies,

Saluted and hailed with my own songs I rise.—
I am lifted beyond your reach.
O the last rapture baffles the heart of speech!—
I love you, and greet you here.
I rise, I whirl, I fade, I disappear.
I melt into song above you,
Showering back a last farewell, "I love you!"

CHORUS TRIUMPHANS

HAIL! For now his soul more near
Toward that, which once to comprehend
With all his life he labored here,
Is lifted upward without end.

Now his spirit to the full
With longing eagerness along
The veins of the most beautiful
Dim Loveliness, in love and song,

Most generously having bled
And poured itself with every breath,
Most generously having shed
His love out on us in his death,

Toward that, to which with such a vast
Insatiate longing here before
He pressed, is lifted up at last,
And ever nearer, more and more.

For not death, that from all these
More mortal modes (wherein we move)
Of life and pain releases, frees
From the immortal need to love.

Till ever nearer, less and less
By these materials that here
Prevent us, hemmed: through Loveliness
Still pressing on more near and near,

With weary longing wholly stilled
And peace of sorrow at her close,
Serene exhaustion all fulfilled,
And most triumphant high repose,

And more inextricably one
With all that we have loved the most,
And all the race of longing run,—
In what we love ourselves are lost,

By Beauty, which but served to call
And lure us onward to the best,
Through love and longing, to where all
Longing and love at last have rest.

This the high, the perfect Whole,
Toward which desires ever tend,—
The cause of longing, and the goal,
And Beauty's origin and end.

(CHORUS RESURGENT)

HAIL! For now his life more near
Toward that, which longingly before
He strove with love to compass here,
Is lifted upward more and more,

Toward that consummate release
And union ever upward moved,
The bridal with white Beauty's peace,
And all that he has ever loved.

Ah, for still unsatisfied
And never resting as before,
Him, Beauty the immortal bride
Lures on to love forevermore!

Ah, for still insatiate
Through all the pilgrimage of pain,
Him, Love and Beauty still persuade
Through love of Her, to be again!

Far beyond these fleshly bars
Of changing loveliness that lures,
Beyond the topmost of the stars,
With infinite longing that endures,

